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FORWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
TO
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF DEMBLIN-MODZJITZ MEMORIAL BOOK

My mother, Roma (Rozenman) Barnes, is from Demblin and survived the Demblin camps and Czenstechov camp. Her parents, Benjamin Rozenman and Chaya (Szajnzicht) Rozenman and younger brother, Sevek, perished in the first liquidation from Demblin, in Sobibor.

This translation is in honor of my mother and the memory of her family, and all those who perished in the Holocaust. This translation is also for the future generations of those from Demblin, who can read in English about their families before them.

This translation of the Demblin-Modzjitz Memorial Book into English was done primarily by Daniel Marlin of Berkeley, California, who translated about 520 pages from Yiddish. It was a huge effort which he completed over a two year period. I am forever indebted to his work on this project, which is of the highest quality.

There were about 130 Hebrew pages of the book, which were translated primarily by Israel Amrani of Sausalito and Amos Malkin of San Francisco. Ruth Rosenwald of San Francisco also translated some pages of Hebrew. You will find variations in the spelling of names and places in this translation. I translated the List of Martyrs Section, which you will note I kept in the same Hebrew alphabetical order as listed in the Yiddish-Hebrew Book.

I wish to thank my husband, Fred Schwartz, for supporting me in this labor of love. I also would like to thank Arye Buckspan, of the Demblin Society in Israel, who answered questions and provided me with information on Demblin through letters. I am especially indebted to Henry and Fella Zambner and my cousins Bella, Mark and Shirley Davis in New York and their mother and grandmother Sala Rozenman-Gropach in Israel, who made it possible for me to have a copy of the Demblin-Modzjitz Memorial Book. I also wish to express my affection for my grandmother Chaya's sister and her husband who were also part of my efforts in this translation. And finally I wish to acknowledge all of my relatives whose roots are in Demblin and who live today in the United States, Israel, France, Germany, England and Canada, many of whom I have had the fortune to meet or correspond with during the process of this translation.

I wish to dedicate this translation of the Demblin-Modzjitz Memorial Book to my daughter, Valeri Schwartz, and to my niece, Camille Castro, so they will always know their roots, and to my brothers, Benjamin and Mark, and my sister, Stephanie, so they will know more about our mother.

Helen Barnes
Larkspur, California --- July, 1994

PREFACE

Demblin -- Irena -- Modzjitz -- Ivangorod... Four names of one place at different times and under different regimes. But in all of the time periods and under all conditions, there lived there and managed to scratch out a living, there dreamed and hoped, a deeply rooted Jewish community -- until Hitler's executioners lowered their hatchet and destroyed the Jewish community on the banks of the Vistula.

Under the ruins of Jewish Poland lies the broken Jewish Demblin. Silent there is the Modzjitzer religious songs, disappeared is the study hall and teachers who were bent over their open Gemoras. The stillness of the graveyard came down on the professional associations, the locals, the Zionist clubs, on the craftsmen and businessmen guilds and on the philanthropic institutions. These were the things that characterized the once buzzing social and political, national and religious life of the place. The Nazi villains and their helpers destroyed everything and wiped it all off the earth so that not even a trace remains...

Not a trace remaining? Oh, those people who were scattered from Demblin and who are still alive won't let that happen, that everything should be just wiped out without even a trace of memory. Even in the times of the terrifying occupation, each slave worker had determination that if he was going to stay alive he would tell about the tragedy and the savagery of the Germans and the martyrdom of the Jewish people. If one was able to live to the liberation it was clear that one of the first and most sacred tasks for those who by some miracle survived, had to be to memorialize in a book the growth and the building up and the tearing down and destruction of Jewish Demblin: to create for Jewish Demblin a really meaningful and powerful monument that would last for generations and generations.

True, we waited awhile to undertake and complete this task. As we write these lines it's exactly 30 years that have passed since that fatal first of September 1939 and 24 years after the destruction of Hitlerism. The delay, though, has had its positive side since thanks to the long years of preparation we've been able to provide the reader with a book of 690 pages in Hebrew and in Yiddish, which reflects faithfully the history of a vital Jewish community in Poland.

The creation of this book memorial is a history for the people themselves who lived through the event. Our book was written by Jews from Demblin -- people who worked hard with their hands, just plain folk, who never imagined that they would be the scribes and the ones to lament for a whole city; that they would have to create the required means, financial means as well, to produce a book with such a purpose that they'd have to overcome so many difficulties; social difficulties and national difficulties and moral difficulties, concerning which, one dare not publish in a book of this character and purpose.

After six years of intensive work, of putting together the material and the money from our Landsmenliet in Israel, France, Belgium, the United States, Canada, Argentina and Brazil -- it's now being published, the "Demblin-Modzjitz Book", a Yartzeit candle, like the inscription on a grave stone -- for the unknown graves of Jews that we knew well.

The Demblin-Modzjitz Book is divided into five parts:

- A. Once There Was a Town
- B. Personalities
- C. The Holocaust
- D. Those from Demblin-Modzjitz, in Israel and Abroad
- E. Pages that Immortalize

We feel it's our duty to thank all of those who, both with pen and with money, made possible the publication of our book memorial, the Lanzleit and the organizations of Landzmen of people from the area, in Israel and in other countries; a mighty thanks and honor comes to the editor of our book, our friend David Stokfish, for his effort and his responsibility in formulating the contents and the form and the image of the book itself; to our friend Avram Kenany, for his editing the Hebrew portion; the workers at the printing house "Arazi" in Tel Aviv, because each one of them in their own way made the book richer and more beautiful.

With a feeling of great honor and respect and with a trembling in my heart -- in the hearts of all those who have been involved in this project, we give to the reader, Demblin-Modzjitz Book. We do it with the sincere hope that our sorely tested people will never need to read books like this again.

Arye Buckspan
Tel Aviv, September 1969

A.

ONCE THERE WAS A TOWN

THE HISTORY OF IRENA-DEMBLIN (According to Historical Sources)

Demblin - A farm within sight of a palace and around it a garden in the county of Novo Alexandrinsky, district of Irena, province of Bobrowniki. Demblin - the center of all the mansions that Tarnovsky owned in the 15th century. The Tarnovskys built a church in Bobrownik that belonged to the mansion. In the 16th century, Menishek inherited the farm. The last one from the Menishek family married the niece of Stanislaw-August who built for her, according to the legend, the palace that exists until today in Demblin and around it he planted a most beautiful park. One of Menishek's daughters married prince Yablonovsky who inherited the mansions in Demblin; but he was one of the participants in the Dekabrist rebellion, therefore, he was expelled in 1825 to the city of Saratov. In 1836 the Russian government bought the mansions that belonged to the prince and in the year 1842, the Czar Nikolai donated them to the prince Paskevitch, then the general governor. In that year, the corner stone was laid for the Ivangorod fort.

Demblin is located next to the Wieprz and Vistula rivers. As it was said, the mansions belong to the Paskevitch family, and their official name is "Ivanovskya Shyolo". Those mansions include: the Demblin mansion, Povaizj'viya, Vimislov, Borova, Matigi and Borovina. In the first three, the land is very fertile, the other three are not. The landscape from the mansion is most beautiful, two rivers flow through it: the Wieprz and the Vistula. Railroads go through it - the Lukov one and the Nadvislan and also roads that cross each other: the road to Warsaw, to Lublin and other roads that go out from the mansion in the length of 4 and 5 *wiorst* [wiorst = approximately 1 kilometer]. Some villages belong to the mansion too: Maizjontska, Ritshietz, Mostshanka, New-Demblin, Lason and Sendovitch - these are located on the right bank of the Wieprz. To the left of the river are the villages Naibzjgov, Naitshetz, Golomb, Bonov, Valka-Kolembaska, Baltov.

Today - The settlements Bobrownik and Irena: two districts -- Irena and Golomb, a post office, a savings and loans, two schools in Bobrownik and Golomb; the size of the mansion is 12,000 *morg* [morg = 610,000 square meters]. The population is very sober, hard working people, but not wealthy. 5,000 morgs are forests and they are under control. The Demblin mansion contains two parts: Demblin and Golomb.

A village by the name of Demblin existed near the palace up to the year 1844. Because of the fort, the village was destroyed. In the year 1865, every valuable piece was taken out from the palace - furniture, plaques with the coat of arms of the various owners, and they transferred it to Homel, where the existing Nobel man lived who was born and raised in Warsaw. Near the palace are dancing halls and theaters. Twelve years ago all the props of the stage were sold to the clubs in Lublin. Behind the church, near the palace, are buried Ivan Paskevitch, the

Commissioner and his wife. Demblin farm sits on 500 morgs. Although the soil is sandy, because of the fertilizers provided by the Ivangorod fort, they were able to grow agriculture plants. They have two "Hofman furnaces" to burn bricks, which supply 8 million bricks a year. This product together with the bricks from the Slatvashin furnace is appointed to build six new forts.

Irena, a settlement in Novo-Alexandrinsky, district of Irena, province of Bobrownik, on the right bank of the Wieprz, a *kavyortz* and half of a *wiorst* from the fort, on the road that goes from Ivangorod fort to Mostshanka, two and a half *wiorsts* from the train station Ivangorod, 20 *wiorsts* from Zijyzjyin, the place where the district court house is, 21 *wiorsts* from Pulawy. This settlement is known usually as a suburb, this means, the suburb of the fort, it was established in 1854 on the land that belonged to the Demblin mansion that is named after the wife of the present owner: Irena. They have a savings and loan that the capital has estimated as 1,079 rubles and savings of 1,500 rubles, a post office, pharmacy, a doctor, a windmill that moves with steam and the product gets to 130,000 rubles, a brewery and wine cellars. The population in Irena is 2,300 residents that live in 96 cabins, but because those houses are built in an area that belongs to the fort, it is possible to destroy them in an emergency within 24 hours.

In 1881 there were 138 industrial factories. The area of Irena is 12,320 threshing boards, from them 8,000 morgs belong to the farmers, and 4000 morgs (1,200 fields and 2,800 forests) belong to Donataryosh. The farmers have horses and wagons. Although profit could be easily made, most of the farmers are poor. It is important to mention that in the whole area that includes two settlements and nine villages, there are only three bars. These places belong to the district; Bobrownik, Demblin, Grambetzjina, Kamlonka, Klashtzjovka, Krasnoglini, Krogovka, Lason, Masov, Melinkow, Mayzshvinki, Mostshanka, Ponvizjba, Ritzjitza, Sendovitch, Zetzjary.

(According to: "The Geographical Dictionary of the Poland Kingdom and other Slavik Countries", by P. Soliversky, B. Halvovsky, and R. Valvksy. Second Book, Warsaw 1881, p. 18 and 300).

Demblin - a village, a county of Garvolin and Vivudzjestvo Varshay, is south of Warsaw. Valley on the right bank of the Vistula, one kilometer away from the mouth of the Wieprz river, 115 meters overseas.

From the 15th century Demblin was in the hands of the Tarnovskys, Menishek and then in the hands of the Yablonovskys. In 1836, the Russian government acquired the Demblin mansions and in the year 1842 they gave it to General Paskevitch. Over time the invaders started to build the Ivangorod fortress and they destroyed the village completely.

During World War II there was a P.O.W. camp (Stalag 307) in the fortress, thousands of soviet prisoners were murdered there by the Nazis.

In Demblin is the Yablonovsky palace that was built in the 13th century in an empire style and was rebuilt in the 19th century. Demblin is a hiking site along the Vistula and Wieprz rivers. Five kilometers northeast are forests mixed with some lakes.

(According to "Slovník Geografický Turistický v Polsku", a geography dictionary for tourists in Poland. Warsaw, 1956, Second Book, p.1400, Publisher--The Tourist Committee.)

THE DESTRUCTION OF JEWISH DEMBLIN IN NUMBERS

The number of Jews before the War - 3,300. In March 1941 - 3,750 (that included 3,185 Jews from Demblin and 565 who came from other places). On the 13th of May 1942 - 1,200 Jews. On the 15th of August 1942 - 5,800 Jews (4,000 of those were people who had arrived from other places). On the 15th of May 1942 - 2,024 Jews were brought from Preschov, Czechoslovakia. On the 6th of May, 1942, 2,500 Jews were sent to Sobibor. On the 15th of October, 1942 - to Treblinka. The remaining Jews in the city were interned at two camps. From January to May 1943, they sent Demblin Jews to their death at Poniatow. On the 22nd and 23rd of July, 1944, they were sent to the camp at Czenstechov (Hasag).

(Pages for history, quarterly journal. Jewish Historical Institute of the Jews in Poland. Volume 3, Journal Number 1 and 2, January to June of 1950, Table 9)

CAMPS IN IRENA-DEMBLIN

<u>Type of Camp</u>	<u>No. of Internees</u>	<u>Date Liquidated</u>	<u>Date Founded</u>	<u>City Street/place Province</u>	<u>No.</u>
Jews	200	Feb. 1943	Aug. 1942	Irena Lipowa Got Garvolin	.387
Jews	120	Jun. 1943	Oct. 1942	Irena Train Station Garvolin	.388
Jews	1,000	Jul23,1944	May 1941	Irena Airfield Garvolin	.389
Jews	200	Jun. 1943	May 1942	Irena Train Bridge Garvolin	.390

(Death camps, concentration camps and work camps on Polish soil in the years 1939-1945. Author: Zafia Tshinsko and Bogomiel Kufsts. A bulletin from the high commission to investigate German crimes in Poland, the First Volume, 1946).

THE CITY ON THE THRESHOLD OF THIS CENTURY

BY B. DEMBLIN

(From the book, "Before Night", Published--Tel Aviv, 1954)

THE MODZJITZ MARKET PLACE

In Modzjitz people were making a living in one door and out the other. The fortress of Ivangorod, which the Russian Czar had built after conquering Poland, was full of military people and contractors and their employees. Jews with stuffed purses of money busied themselves around the fairs and market places, in the whole area. What they did was to buy the supplies that were needed by the people who were in the military in the fortress. That included feed and big silos full of grain, fields full of cabbage, potatoes and onions.

Besides that, there was a big train center in Ivangorod in Russian-Poland. There was a whole town of red brick houses that had been built up around the station. The train employees, conductors and clerks, were able to provide a living to the little town of Jews. Through the station, finished goods from half of Poland passed out to the broad Russian provinces. Also, from the other directions towards Prussia and the empire in Austria, came trains full of Russian wheat, fish from Rostov, sugar from Kiev and Polish pigs and fowl of every sort.

Jews of Modzjitz lived and laughed at that time. On Sundays the town was full of soldiers. Organ grinders in gentile hats with shiny brims and polished boots with lacquered polish, tapped on their organs in a very spirited way. They would play out *Kamarkas* [folk music] and very soulful, Ukrainian songs. The white mice, with transparent little pink ears, would creep on the organs in and out of their little cages. The green parrots, with sharp, down turned beaks, sat looking very wise and dignified on the little sticks across their cages. For a little copper six cent piece, with their beaks, they would extract from a little cookie a scroll with your fortune inside from little drawers. Sometimes the little scrolls would be red, sometimes green and sometimes they would be blue. And the parrot would carry this little scroll over to the soldier, who stood impatiently, and who would quickly read the secret fortune that was his.

Moving away from the organ grinders, on both sides of the market, standing there with their knife sharpeners and key makers, were tailors with their journeymen. There were people with white bakery goods and sweet meats with fruits and other goodies. Also in their little tents, behind their half leaning doors where one didn't dare to violate the holy day with a few cents of redemption, were packed with soldiers, making up for the whole week.

In the market place, forthright and free as the wind, the Jews moved around among the soldiers and bought little bits here and there of leather implements, old boots and canvas packs. Everything that the *Kuzna* [Czar] let the soldiers have for their own use. Other Jews, not the pious kind, had their own little forbidden taverns which their wives and underage daughters would quietly run for them. Behind covered up windows, around bare, wooden tables, the soldiers and peasants would drink booze, eat fried liver and broiled pieces of duck and always try to grab a young woman with broad hips and pull her down onto their lap.

[See PHOTO-A1 at the end of Section A]

Before the Modzjitzer shop keepers filled up their shelves again, after Sunday, there was the Wednesday market, when the city was packed with horses and wagons which the peasants had hitched up. When they got there they would unhitch the horses facing the wagons and give them a pail of oats to eat while they were gone and then they would take off into the market place.

The hurly-burly of the market began even before dawn. On both sides of the highway, the length of it, along where the channels where rain water would flow, sat gypsies in brightly colored, striped tents and around them were sacks with produce with golden onions, silver-white garlic, tied up fowl and baskets full of eggs.

A little bit further up the road on the other side, were little stalls where little Holy things were sold. On broad tables under canvas awnings there were pictures spread out of the Holy mother with the Holy child at her breast. There were little necklaces of prayer beads, brown and black, with little and bigger crucifixes. And they hung in little clumps, little Jesus' stuck with a pierced bloodied heart and a crown of thorns on his head, others with his hands and feet bound, carved into the cross. These were thrown in big piles. The peasant men and women would go from stall to stall and they would chose and buy the little images of God with the same suspicion and caution with which at other stalls they would buy their little candies and sweetmeats.

Near the area where the little Holy beads and crucifixes were sold were the beggars, *Djodis and Bobis* [Grandfathers and Grandmothers], with their legs wrapped up, barefoot, with crutches and canes near them. They would sit on little bundles of straw with their feet behind them and they would rock back and forth as if they didn't even have any bones in their body. With bare heads and outstretched hands, to the people going by, they would repeat little Holy verses and sing church songs and would cross themselves repeatedly every time a penny fell into their hat.

Down the highway, in the middle of the market place, it was like an anthill. Horses whinnied, pigs grunted, cows and calves mooed, hens crowed, ducks quacked,

geese whistled and bit the air. The Jews and peasants would slap each other on the hands, finish a deal and with the prophets go off and drink a little bottle of booze.

In front, on the other side of the market, there were big spreads of second hand stuff. Under big, open awnings, there were all kinds of clothes hung and spread out, boots and fancy shoes, furs, hats and near them, under the open sky, piled up on the soft, moist earth, there were mountains of pots and bowls and barrels, sinks, beds and armoires, which smelled of freshly finished wood.

In this way, from the Sunday market and the Wednesday market, the Jews of Modzjitz made a living. Butchers bought live stock, tradesmen rented horses, storekeepers weighed and measured and packed all of the goods and raw produce that would come from the countryside. They put it in sacks and boxes and sent it off into the fortress and got it loaded onto rail cars and sent it away to cities that were far away. The craftsmen of Modzjitz, with their journeymen, had more work than they could handle. They finished wood, they hammered and they were busy from early in the morning until sun down. In winter, they worked late into the night. Because of the volume of business on Sundays and Wednesdays, the Jewish population of the town and of the surrounding villages grew, and people made their way to Modzjitz to settle there. They could find a roof over their heads and a little bit of bread to eat and so they came.

THE FIFTH YEAR [1905] IN MODZJITZ

[Note -- in 1905 there was an aborted revolution in Russia]

In the middle of the summer, guests would come to Modzjitz who usually would show up only before Passover and before Succoth. Very unexpectedly, they began to come home, the daughters and sons of Modzjitz, from Warsaw and Lodz, where they worked in shoe shops and tailor shops, in laundries, in carpenter shops and in all different kinds of businesses. They weren't coming home as they would sometimes do during the high holidays, in carriages, with a certain display. Their new clothes were packed into baskets and valises in fresh paper and one by one, very quietly, with little bundles under their arms, they came home now.

From the guests, Modzjitz learned, that in Warsaw and in Lodz and in all of the big cities of the Russian state, things were growing dark. "There are strikes at factories, the workers are marching with red banners, shouting 'Hurrah!' and 'Down with the Czar!'." In many places, in Warsaw, they were getting ready to carry out pogroms.

Along with these scary stories about pogroms, the people also brought other unheard of stories, which both uplifted and oppressed the mood and filled people's

hearts with a certain bit of awe and terror. The guests told about unity between Jews and gentiles, about burning stoves and boiling pots of water which people had ready to pour from the windows on people who tried to carry out pogroms.

Like the decrees about the schools that came before, these kinds of stories created two sides in the town. On one side were the fathers and mothers of the kids who had come back. They were simple people, crafts people and butchers and carriage drivers. They were the kind of people whose blood ran hot in their veins, Jews with fists like big fat heavy loads. People for whom bending their heads down in humility wasn't an option. People who would honor the person who attacked them with two smacks for one. Just folks who were well trained, even as well as soldiers. These Jews felt inspired by the news they were getting about revolvers and *Kinshjalen*, with which people prepared themselves to meet those who wanted to carry out pogroms, and their blood boiled when they heard about atrocities, their fists rolled up in fury.

On the other side were the bosses of the town, those who had journeymen working for them and employees, the fine people, so to speak, of the town. Among them, there really wasn't much of a difference as there used to be between Abel and Simcha Puterflam. Each one, the Hasid as well as the businessman (the rich merchant who was an undertaker), they all had the same reaction to this kind of mood and talk and they felt it was just rebellion against God and against the State with the only difference that for Abel and his folk, the rebellions were a desecration of the Jewish religious way of life. For Simcha Puterflam and the other bosses like him, it was a rebellion of shoemaker's apprentices and cooks who wanted to turn the world upside down. Both the aesthetic, religious Abel, and the well turned out Simcha Puterflam, who was a nouveau-rich, with a big, fat belly and a smoothly shaven, red head, both of them, mocked and disparaged both the people who were bringing the news from other parts about what was happening with these kinds of issues as well as those who listened to them.

Simchala Puterflam even threatened the folks who were coming back with this kind of news. Surrounded in the market place with a group of Jews who toadied up to him because he was a rich man and a man of the world, he warned, "In Modzjitz, there's not going to be any strikes. All these crazy people aren't going to raise their heads up here. This is a fortress town. And don't forget that the fortress has its own troops and people to take care of this kind of stuff!"

Among the younger people who came back were three sons of Modzjitz, each one of which had ripped out the heart of and caused great shame to their own parents. There were Isaac (Yitzhak) Kanterovitch, the Purim businessman's son, Vladimir (Velvel) Horwitz, the son of Yoel the butcher and Yaacov-Hershela, Moshe-Leizor's son.

These three boys were from a while back already quite out of step and at odds with the town and with their parents.

The Purim businessman's young son really slapped his father in the face. The father had hung all of his dreams on the son. He himself wasn't able to tear himself away from his business life in exile. For that reason, he always dreamed of bringing up his son according to the ideal that he carried in his mind, to make him a new kind of a Jew, who would go off to Israel and help build up the Holy Land.

The Purim businessman didn't entrust all this to happen just by miracle, he didn't give his son over to the religious teacher of Modzjitz who would teach him a little bit of the Tenach, the old testament, nor to the other religious schools, where they would stuff the children full of Gemorah. Since this was before the era of the Lithuanian religious teacher, the father decided that he was going to teach his son by himself. Every day after the *Ma'ariv* [evening prayer], he left his store in charge of his wife and sat down at his table with his little boy in order to drill into him a little bit of Isaia and Jeremiah, some grammar, but also the holy language "Hatzfira". Even before Modzjitz had heard of a State school, he had already sent his son to learn Polish and Russian, and when he got his Bar-Mitzvah, he decked him out in a student hat with a lacquered brim, dressed him up in the appropriate little uniform, with the back pack, with books in it on his shoulders, and sent him away to the agricultural school near Czenstechov.

The pale, half consumptive, Purim businessman, was always hoping for the day when he would be able to send his son on his way to Israel so that his younger brothers would someday be able to follow him there and he would be able to help them and then he himself would be able to throw off the weight of his life in Poland and he himself would follow and go to the Holy land and establish himself there as well. But his son Yitzhak took a very different path. He decided he didn't want to go to the agriculture school and left and entered a polytechnic school in Warsaw. Well, that wasn't too terrible. After all, to build the new land of Israel, you did need engineers, just as you needed people who knew about agriculture. But, even worse, he not only walked out of the agriculture school, he also threw out the Zionist ideals. He no longer had any interest in speaking a single word of Hebrew and instead of the great dream of liberating Eretz-Israel, he burned to liberate Poland. Poland, he said, was his home, not Palestine. Even the Yiddish language no longer found its way to his lips. Just Polish, and more Polish. It didn't help, no matter how much his father talked to him or how much his mother cried. Of course, his father would have liked to find some way to resolve this with his son, but on the other hand where is it written that he has to carry on his shoulders the burden of his son until he becomes a regular Polish engineer, and for that matter, a Polish patriot. It might even be more of a mitzvah if he were to withhold the allowance he sent his son every month, in order that he himself, that much sooner, could get out of his business, close down his store, and save

himself by going to Israel before the younger children grew up and were led astray by their wayward older brother. But God punished him. And Yitzhekel, the son, had in fact inherited not only his father's stubbornness, but also his weak lungs. The story is that Yitzhekel was just skin and bones. His pallor had turned an ashen green, he was even coughing up drops of blood. Now, should Yitzhekel be allowed to work in a factory, as he threatened to do, and then spend the whole night buried in his books, studying? And if that were to happen, it wouldn't be very long before he wouldn't have a son to argue with about whether or not he should go to Israel, or whether or not he should be a Zionist or not, or whether or not he should be a Pole or not. This really tore up the father's heart, this whole process. Maybe with the help of God something good would come of all this. Also there was the anticipation of very, very unsettled times in the world. The son, instead of studying, had taken to hanging out in the cellars and attics of Warsaw. He all of a sudden became a proletarian, with the "P.P.S.". Day and night he ran around to meetings and talked his weak, consumptive lungs out. God forbid if his father had not run to Warsaw to bring him home, who knows what would have happened to him. He might even have rotted away in prison.

The other individual who came back in those days was the butcher's son. He was just the opposite of Yitzhekel. Just as thin and green and pale as Yitzhekel was, Velvela was red faced and healthy, just as if he'd been taken off the butcher's chopping block. Until a little bit after his Bar-Mitzvah, he liked to hang around the religious study house, he liked to study the Gemorah. But then he began to secretly, instead of that, look at secular books. He buried himself in secular books. He prepared himself for the examination at the University.

But before Velvela lived to go to the University, his father, Yoel Katzev, a bitter Jew, with a pair of heavy, menacing evil eyebrows, got infuriated. More than once Velvela's father wanted to cut him off, and the wars between he and his father just never stopped, until at one point, if the son hadn't had his mother's, Yechbudel, the butcher's wife's big head on his own shoulders, he wouldn't have come up with a really super idea or trick. In the middle of his father's scolding him and telling him he was going to drive him out of the house and turn him out without a bite of bread in his mouth, Velvela came out with this, "I'm going to convert".

This little word worked like magic. Yoel the butcher was absolutely stunned into silence, like an ox who gets hit over the head with an ax. From terror of conversion he became soft as butter. The poor man wiped his mouth and in all this business with his son he decided he was just going to turn it over to his wife, a woman who was a head taller than him, a Cossack with a mannish voice for whom the women who came into the butcher shop trembled. But this very Yechbudel, just as she could be sharp and tough and boss people around, also knew, when it was necessary, how to hide her toughness and wrap it up in sweet, flattering tones, and speak in her manly voice so softly that it was like oil flowing

from her broad, big mouth. And in that way, she, Yechbudel, hearing of her son's threat to convert, said to her husband, "Let me take care of this, Yoel, I'll work it out with him."

In truth, Yechbudel, the butcher's wife, felt that it really wasn't such a dangerous situation. After all, the kid didn't go to a priest. It was just a little conversion game. Nevertheless, you shouldn't tease the devil. And so she prepared to talk to him in a very honey, sweet voice and she went back to the house and she sat down across from him and laid her two butcher's hands, which were all bloody, on the table, and began to talk to him in a very soft, soothing way.

"Tell me, what's really going on here Velvel? You don't want to study [*religious*], you don't want to work in the butcher's shop, a person has to do something!"

"I want to study [*secular*]," the boy raising his head from his book, and calmly and sharply replied.

"What is it with this, what are you talking about, studying? How are you going to do this?" But, on that score, Velvel wasn't really worried. His father and mother could cry all they wanted, but he knew that since the War the father's business, through Simchela Puterflam, was going great guns, because he supplied the meat to the fortress. In the process his leather wallet which he kept under his shirt, was swollen with money. Not only did he now have a one story house, but he had a wall around it to show for himself. So his father was quite wealthy and he wasn't really worried about his father's ability to take care of him.

"It's not really going to take that much anyway for me to get an education," he calmed his mother. Then they essentially started to haggle with each other, he and his mother, until he pretty much got what he wanted. Poor old Yoel the butcher, groaned and gave up the money to his wife and his wife fixed her boy up with clean laundry and took care of his clothes with money and a monthly allowance and sent him on his way. Frankly, people barely knew where he went. A while later, people learned that he had gone to St. Petersburg and was studying medicine there. Now, though, he came home, but the person who came home was not Velvel the butcher's son, but Vladimir-Horwitz, a medical student in a black satin shirt, buttoned all the way up to his throat with a red silk belt and a thick, black curl over his brow. A regular "Socialist".

The third kid, Yaacov Hershela, was, to tell the truth, really not a student at all. He wanted to study, but he stayed in his father's shop. The father, a very well dressed Jew, with a black, meticulously combed beard, was a timber merchant who had two sets of clothes, one for God and one for the World. He wore a big fur hat, and a black coat on the Sabbath to pray at the Rabbis. During the week, when he was on timber business, he wore a slightly battered coat but of elegant gray material. His hat was narrow with a little brim, very Jewish, yet foppish.

Moshe-Leizor wasn't particularly afraid of conversion, like simple Yoel the butcher. And he also wasn't afraid of his son's threats that he would darken the family name by becoming a wagon driver. Moshe-Leizor was of Abel's way of thinking. He was not of an elite, Hasidic family, but he was a Hasid from Modzjitz. He was a very stubborn man and a powerful, influential person. His motto essentially was, either his son follows the path he set out for him or he can get out. He really wanted, this Moshe-Leizor, that his son, Yaacov-Hershela, the only son of his first wife, should be like he was, a man who was devoted both to God and to business. He didn't spare any money. He spent freely on the best religious teachers. He also allowed him to learn to write and to do math, because a Jew without a pen was, in Moshe-Leizor's mind, like a blind man without a staff.

But, all of these things didn't appeal to Yaacov-Hershela at all. He really didn't know what he wanted. He was an orphan without a real sense of belonging from childhood on, in a house with a stepmother, his father always on the road or in Danzig or in the forests. The boy grew up without a real sense of respect. He was always at odds with everybody around him. Moshe-Leizor might have allowed him to go and study but, he was afraid to entrust any money to him, especially somewhere where he couldn't keep his eye on him. Even under his father's roof, the boy wasn't a very respectful person. He never picked up a religious book, and what's even worse, he was a thief. As soon as the father, Friday evening, used to stick his purse with money into the cabinet, the boy, with his own key, the hell with Sabbath, took the purse and used the money, not only on himself, but with other kids, who he hung around with. They went around to restaurants and pigged out on roast geese, they drank beer, and fooled around with the girls. And, even if Moshe-Leizor hid his purse, so that his son couldn't find it, he stole something from the house and he pawned it, whatever he could get. He carried on so. One day he lifted his father's golden cigarette case, his father's first wedding present.

For awhile, Yaacov-Hershela tried to fight it out with his father to try to get his father to give him money so he could travel to Warsaw and prepare himself with the University, meanwhile though, while he was still in Modzjitz, he started to grow his hair long, like Gorky, whose picture he had, just to spite his father, hanging over his head where he slept. He also had a shirt with a silk belt, he used to wear that all the time. Seeing his son acting this way, his father, Moshe-Leizor, instead of giving him money so that he could go to the University, just threw him out of the house all together. At that point the son went away to Radom, and really got back at his father. He really darkened the family name and spit on his inheritance by becoming a wagon driver.

Now, he came back home, Yaacov-Hershela, a regular socialist. Not even a student. Still though, because of his family background, he hung around with students like Vladmir-Horwitz and Isaac-Kanterovitch, but he would also scold them and call them assimilationists and he used to say they danced at the

weddings of strangers. Not the P.P.S., that Isaac belonged to, that's not going to free Poland, nor the Bund, the Socialist movement in Russia of the Russian Proletariat that Horwitz belonged to, that isn't going to do any good either, that's not going to help the Jewish people at all. Only a Jewish Proletariat and a return to Israel is going to answer the Jewish question.

Little by little, the young people who came back, these three in particular, became sort of important people in Modzjitz in their own way. Their word was listened to, became a command almost. When they gave the word, the work place would just shut down. And when they winked, the workers would go back to their jobs. They started to dictate or give orders about just how much work the boss could ask of one of their employees, and how many hours in a day they should have to work. Girls who were servants came to them and complained about their bosses. And poor folks came to them looking for justice against all kinds of things that were done to them. Already people had begun to stop going to the Rabbi to work things out and had begun to start going to the State courts. Not only poor folk came to get some kind of resolution from these young men but even Yoel the butcher who had awhile before made up with his son, said before his son's eyes, the way it is now, it is my son's word about a given matter that has more import now, even more than the Modzjitzer Rabbi's!

Modzjitz really was truly and really turned upside down. The workers didn't buddy around like they used to with the bosses. They didn't play around anymore at cards with the bosses. They didn't go to synagogue anymore to pray. Even the school kids became a lot more bold.

With a mixture of fear, respect and mockery, the bosses looked on while their workers quit work at six o'clock in the evening, washed up, changed their clothes, took a little walking stick in their hands and walked up and down the highway as if it were a Sabbath day!

And the police didn't even get mixed up in all of this. The local troops were never actually seen, they kept a very low profile. It seemed as if they were hiding out at the tavern and looking out from behind the curtains, smiling into their mustaches. The "goyim" were somehow in turmoil. Their peasant heads weren't able to take in everything that was happening. They couldn't understand why the State authorities were apparently just keeping quiet and why they didn't ask them to get involved and why the fortress just made believe as if nothing were happening. Even the army patrols and the Cossacks who roamed over town with loaded rifles acted as if nothing were going on. If somebody from some corner would scream out, "Down with dictatorship, Hurrah!", the Cossacks just smiled and went on their way, as if it really didn't mean anything.

Something like a very sunny, happy, magical holiday, had descended on the town.

THE RABBI'S HOUSE

The Rabbi's house was just a few steps from the courtyard where Yarme-David, with a whole bunch of other poor people lived, in little broken down houses, yet the Rabbi's house seemed like it was on a different planet.

It was a very spacious, wooden house. It's color was a dark brick color, with carved cornices over the door and big, broad windows. There were many acacia trees in the front of the house and their perfume filled the air throughout the summer. Their broad, thick branches covered and separated the house from the open market and spread a cool shadow over the little park area.

In the courtyard, as in an office, the Rabbi had his own, big study hall. On holidays, it was packed with Hasidim who had traveled there from all over Poland. Behind the study hall there was a little bit of a field with a thick orchard where rich Hasidim rented out spaces for their carriages that they traveled in.

This particular Sabbath evening, when Yarme-David went in to see the Rabbi, the house was very, very bright. The lights were on in all of the rooms as if it were a holiday. The Rabbi's family, his sons and daughters, sons-in-laws and daughters-in-laws, grandchildren, big and small, in rustling silk and quiet, soft satin and fur, busied themselves throughout the rooms as if now it was the week time again, it was no longer officially the Sabbath, and they were going to start to make up for the time they were not doing anything.

It was very bright now in the Rabbi's courtyard. From all sides in the closed courtyard Hasidim walked around with the remains of white challah loaves stuck in their shirt. Some of them brought along a little bit of schnapps that was left over from the Sabbath feast. Store owners brought fat, juicy herring in to Tirtze, in the kitchen, so that she could chop them up with onions and apple, mix it up with vinegar and make a very tasty borscht.

In the big kitchen, which was placed in the house as if it were a pack on the back of the house, poor Hasidim worked over pots. They stirred them and lifted them onto the big, blue colored lime stove in which fire crackled happily under all the burners of the stove. In the middle of the kitchen the cook moved around, she was an *aguna* [a wife who's husband has left her], with a big behind and a pair of thick arms and a mouth which never stopped moving and never stopped telling the Hasidim what to do with the baskets full of potatoes and beets. She bossed them around like you would a shoemaker's apprentice.

"Why are you peeling that so thick? There's not going to be anything left to throw in the pot!"

Also, in front of her, in a brightly lit study hall, it was very lively. Young men with beards, in their Sabbath hats and coats with their belts hanging out, busied themselves back and forth. They sat at the heavy, carved table and on benches and they sang Psalms in the original words of David the King, and they sang out with joy and gusto, "*David, Melech Yisrael, Chai, Chai, Vekayam*".

It was quiet though, in the other wing of the house and around the Rabbi's room. The Modzjitzer Rabbi, a very distinguished man with big, wise gray eyes and a broad, gray beard with curly payes, had just come in from the big dining hall where he made *havdala* [end of Sabbath prayer] for the whole household over a golden beaker of wine. Two little boys, the youngest grandchildren, in silk coats with gold braided Yalmelkas stood on two chairs on the sides of the table and held high the braided, many colored *havdala* candle, which flickered and spritzed with joyous light over those for whom the Rabbi made the blessing, "*Boray...*".

Meanwhile, there in the lit up dining hall the sons-in-laws and sons sang the "*Hamavdel Ben Kodesh Lechol*", and while they were doing that, the Modzjitzer Rabbi, with a wrinkled hat on his head, in a big silk coat and white socks with soft slippers on his feet, went into his room and walked back and forth, from the book case with the Holy books, to the table, and from the table to the book case with the Holy books, and very quietly to himself he kind of murmured a little melody that he just made up. He completely forgot his long, blue porcelain pipe, freshly lit for him, which the Shames, Noteh, gave to him, as a token of the beginning of the week. Deep in thought, he mulled over the tone and rhythm of the new melody that he'd made up. He held one hand inside of his garment as he did this and out of his garment there was just a little tip of a red, Turkish handkerchief.

It was very quiet in the anti-room that led to the Rabbi's room. Noteh, the Rabbi's Shames, a short Jew, gray, hairy, with a lot of veins in his brow and nose, whose appearance resembled that of an old tree, was already very much involved with weekly activities. From one side he blew on the hollow part of his boot, which he didn't have on, as if it were with the bellows, and he blew over the chimney of the samovar.

"Isaac told me, before praying in the morning, that you have to have a conference with somebody."

The hairy little Jew started to scratch under his satin shirt. He was a little bit uneasy because as long as he could remember nobody had come to see the Rabbi on a consultation during the regular week.

"Wait a minute", he said and began to pick up his boot. Now he slowly walked to the window, wiped it a little bit with his forefinger on the moist glass and put over his soft jacket a long coat and slowly walked into the Rabbi's room.

Yarme-David, with three groshen notes ready in hand, which is the Rabbi's fee, was standing now in front of the door to the anti-room. The whole time, Noteh, the Shames stood. Yarme-David stood with his heart beating in a state of trepidation. "*Rebenu Shalolem*, God-almighty". Would he at least be able to maintain his strength? Would he at least be able to tell the Rabbi everything that was pressing his heart? Would he be able to confess that he himself, with his own hands, had brought about this tragedy? First he had brought about his mother's death. Now Chana-Leah is so very, very sick, will the Rabbi at least give him a hearing and would he be able to give him some kind of counsel to guide him?

But just then the door to the Rabbi's room opened. Yarme-David kind of twitched, as if he were about to lose his balance and he couldn't even go any further and he just about fell in through the open door. Noteh, though, with his own breath, his own body, stood in his way, said quietly, "Wait", and even more quietly to the Rabbi through the door behind him.

For the first time the hairy little Jew, in a pretty unpleasant way, began to berate Yarme-David about what the Rabbi was supposed to get.

"Illiterate, bumpkin, cattle-driver!", he said very sharply and looking at the Jew with the red beard, who was almost on the verge of tears. "Before you go into the Rabbi, I better write out a little bill for you about the transaction."

"Of course, of course, Reb Noteshe", Yarme-David in a beaten down way stammered. "Of course I brought the fee for him". And he began to open his hand with the three copper coins.

The little Jew slowly walked to the window, sat down by the table and began to write something with a goose feather over a little bit of paper and while he was doing this he frequently lifted his head and looked at Yarme-David.

"How is the sick woman doing? And how is your mother? How is her mother and how's your mother?"

Like a very attentive and fearful child, Yarme-David stood near the hairy Jew and answered with terror and fear everything he was asked.

Finally Noteh finished up his writing, he laid the quill down and took a little sand scattering device and scattered the sand on the moist script with little rows of white dry sand. Now he lifted up his very hairy hand to Yarme-David's hand but since Yarme-David didn't grasp what the other Jew was waiting for he just simply, without getting it, stuck out his hand with red hairs on it to get the note that had just been written out. Noteh said to him in an angry, belligerent way, "You cattle-driver! You know writing out this little piece of paper here costs six groshens".

Yarme-David felt the blood rush to his face, not God forbid from anger, but from shame. It was true, he had never even thought about Noteh. He had only thought about the eight groshens that he had to pay for the consultation.

"Reb Noteh, I will, with God's help, make this up to you," Yarme-David said with shame. "I don't have a cent more than 8 groshens for the Rabbi, blessed be his name."

Noteh, the Shames, got very heated. The red veins in his hairy nose got redder.

"What arrogance and chutzpah!" He pushed his chair away. "During the week you're already trying to do things on credit. Do you also try to borrow money and get off free from the doctor?"

Yarme-David just stood there. He couldn't even think of anything to say. It wasn't his way to fall down in front of somebody and beg. He could only try to reply once, that was the best he could do rather than try and explain something a second time. He'd rather be buried alive before he'd ask anybody to lend him anything or God forbid, give him anything. He wasn't that kind of person. Reb Noteh saw that there wasn't much point in proceeding this way and so he finally just shoved the bill into his hand and led him into the Rabbi's room.

"Good week, Rabbi", Yarme-David said very quietly, he stammered it with fear in his voice.

The Rabbi didn't pay any attention to Yarme-David's greeting, he simply answered, "Good week, good year", and continued sitting with his back to the inner part of the house. All that Yarme-David saw was a high back of a very soft, red material chair, two long gray curled payes, and a little satin hat on the top of his head. He heard a little bit of a murmuring. The Rabbi was murmuring something to himself and he was rocking back and forth, to the left and to the right, like a metronome.

With great fear Yarme-David moved over to the table, with trembling hands he laid the receipt he'd gotten outside with his three sixer notes and then he moved backwards like a pious Jew would move backwards from a holy place.

Also at this moment, the Rabbi didn't look at him. He just sat there and pushed away the little mound of money notes, took a hold of the receipt with the information it had and brought it very, very close to his eyes.

His reading of it just took a few seconds, but it seemed like an eternity to Yarme-David. Finally the Rabbi turned his head towards him.

"Yarme-David, son of Perel, go home. The sick woman Leah, daughter of Chava, is going to be all right, she's going to get a cure and feel better."

Yarme-David stood there dumbly. How can he go now. How can he pass up this opportune moment with the Rabbi. Did he just come here for a cure for his wife so that his wife would feel better? And what about him? What about his own problems? He needed, unfortunate one that he was, to ask for some way of getting out of his deep problem, from the Rabbi, his great feeling of guilt, which he carried in himself since his mother's death, and now afterwards, when it seemed that Chana-Leah had become so ill and in danger.

"Holy Rabbi", he fell into the Rabbi's lap, "Save me, I am sinful. Only God, through you, Rabbi, can help me. I'm willing to take on myself the most difficult kind of repentance."

Just now, Yarme-David began to really cry and a stream of imprecations, begging and praying just flowed from him, as if from a full barrel where the spout had just been opened. It was the first time in his life that a great whale of tears had opened in him with such power.

"Holy Saint, with my own hands I took my mother out of this world!"

The Rabbi fell away from Yarme-David and he was really upset by what he was saying. He was very, very unnerved by it. His very refined, white hands which had been resting in the wide silk cuffs of his garment had quickly reached out to help Yarme-David to stand up, now were trembling, as if they would, God forbid, begin to really convulse seriously. After all, it's not a small thing for a Jew to confess to killing his own mother, God forbid.

"What are you talking about, Yarme David! Have you, God forbid, gone crazy?", asked the Rabbi with his voice trembling and his face became even whiter than it already was, even whiter than the broad, white collar of his shirt.

Little by little Yarme-David cried himself out and told the Rabbi what was pressing his heart. The Rabbi, after hearing everything, calmed down. Praised be God. This Jew, God forbid, isn't any real villain, hasn't committed any real terrible crime. Maybe he fulfilled a curse which his mother called upon herself.

Just then the Rabbi very calmly laid his two outstretched hands on Yarme-David's shoulders and spoke to him in a soft fatherly voice. "Yes, it certainly is a sin to bring a curse to your mouth, or, God forbid, to effectuate a curse that someone else has brought upon themselves. But God is compassionate and He will forgive you, but of course it's important that you will atone and atonement is a very, very important matter and this is what it says, especially about this, in the Law, 'Where a repentant stands, even the utterly righteous cannot stand.' This is the

interpretation, 'Somebody who really is atoning with all their heart can purify themselves in a way that even a saint can not achieve.' So stand up, Yarme-David, and promise me that you will fulfill everything that I tell you to do."

"Yes Rabbi, I'll even rip out the stones of the bridge with my teeth."

"Now, now", the Rabbi waived that away, as if he was just being much too common and coarse about the whole thing. "A Jew shouldn't talk that way. Better, in the morning, immediately after you go and pray, go to your mother's grave and ask for her forgiveness. You should say to her, 'I, Yisrael, son of Malka, a sprout from the line of Zvolin, forgive me.' Ask her to undue the curse which she originally, for your sake, brought upon herself. I hope, merciful God, that she will forgive you. A mother always forgives her children. Afterwards, go in peace back from the graveyard, and you should immediately have a *brit* [circumcision ceremony] because, you have with your fasting and the things that you're going to do to make up for all this, you're not going to have a daughter born to you to disgrace the seed, you need therefore to have a brit that is really sumptuous with fish and meat because Natan is the interpretation given and Chaim's life. Revenu Shalolem God gave life and what God gives we should take without resistance. One doesn't say his beloved name lightly, you hear, Yarme-David? And if you fulfill all of the different things that I've just laid out, I tell you that, God willing, you'll come to the brit and stand there holding a child, and the pregnant woman, Chana-Leah, daughter of Chava, will as a result of what you've done, have a cure and be healthy again.

"Amen", Yarme-David said with a quiet, humble voice. Yarme-David listened to what the Rabbi had to say with his head bent down and his eyes turned down. Although the Rabbi didn't exactly comfort him, even scolded him, still, each word of the Rabbi's was like dew from heaven. He felt great stones roll off his heart so that his heart was free again, and it was once again possible to live in the world. He felt the real possibility of hope and life again that He in heaven will forgive his sins. But a brit with fish and meat and guests at the feast, how can he manage that?

Yarme-David began to stumble over this point in his own thoughts because it wasn't exactly his way to take upon himself obligations or promises when he knew that he couldn't fulfill them. It was clear to him that he didn't have the means to take care of them. He wanted to ask, "Holy Rabbi, a brit like that? I'm just a poor cattle driver." However, the Rabbi already knew what he was thinking and didn't even let him ask. He just responded to him, "About the brit, don't worry, with God's help, everything will happen."

Yarme-David kissed the mezuzah. Quiet and humble, he said, "Good week, Rabbi", and he went out of the Rabbi's room.

Coming outside, he wanted to run home and tell the good news, but outside there he met up with a tall fellow, Isaac.

Isaac was kind of a bent over fellow and always seemed to be in deep thought with both hands folded into his sleeve. And he was kind of humming a little melody of the Modzjitzer Rabbi. At this moment, tall Isaac was on his way to the Rabbi in the prayer house to the meal that ushers out the Sabbath. Meeting up with Yarme-David, with great contentment, he stopped.

"Good week, Yarme-David. I hope that you have some kind of great salvation happen to you."

"Amen", Yarme-David very piously answered.

"So, what did I tell you?", tall Isaac said with some victory in his voice, just as if he had known what the Rabbi said to Yarme-David. "So, you want to follow me. It's like I told you Yarme-David, it's nothing really that terrible. There's a great God in the world. Now listen to me, come in, we'll eat the feast together to usher out the Sabbath."

"What are you talking about, Isaakel? This kind of a Sabbath meal in the Rabbi's house, I don't belong there. I'm just a cattle driver, I don't belong among Hasidim and fine Jews."

"That doesn't make sense", tall Isaac said with a wag of his head. "In the eyes of the Almighty, all Jews are equal."

But after all the talk, tall Isaac went alone to the study house and Yarme-David went home. Before leaving the gateway of the Rabbi's place, he turned around again once and he looked at the windows of the Rabbi's prayer house and he heard the singing that flowed out from there and it moved him. The sky was clear, the stars sparkled, a half moon like a silver horn hung over the Rabbi's roof. In the prayer house, around the big study table, Hasidim sat, bunched together. They had their big, flat black hats on, their black coats with silk material and they rhythmically rocked back and forth and with their rocking sang sweet, religious reverent song. And Yarme-David felt very warm inside and it seemed to him that everything became brighter and the trees became quieter and the mysterious fields and the roofs covered with snow and the great expanse were holding their breath and listening to the Jews as they sung:

*Our descendants and wealth shall multiply as sand,
and as stars at night!*

PESACH MELAMED'S LITTLE SCHOOL

Although the summer heat was awful, just like fire flowing down from heaven, Pesach-Melamed, a pale Jew with a broad white beard and gray tearful eyes, sat as always in a jacket garment of soft, black cotton which was buttoned up all the way to his skinny throat.

The hair on his head was yellow with age and on it there was a thick, saturated by sweat, feathered, turning green, satin Yalmekah. Around him, on both sides of the table, which had been nicked and carved with little boys' knives, sat four and five year old students, bent over open, yellowed prayer books and they rocked rhythmically back and forth singing after him with feeling, "*Yig Dal!*"

"Higher, goyim", Pesach-Melamed encouraged them, "Higher! I want to hear it better". He encouraged the little Jews in their big prayer shawls with the little curled payes. "Higher, once again, *Yud, Yud Gimel, Petach Dalet, Lamed!* Once again, *Yig-Dal!*".

Just as Pesach-Melamed, with the little boys at the table in front, just as he was working with them, in the same way, in another corner, near the door, sat one of his assistant teachers, a tall young man, thin, with a pale face, which was covered with little red freckles. Around him, on both sides of the table, sat a whole bunch of girls, some of them fairly old, with heavy braids and high, full bosoms. The girls also rhythmically repeated what he had said, what they'd been reading from open, yellowed prayer books. They read it and he just said it by heart and they followed him.

Away from the table, over the whole breath of the big, four cornered room, there were rows of long, black colored reading benches which actually were like a gentile school. On the seats and on the reading desks there was a convergence of a lot of little kids, it was like it was an anthill. Little boys of three to six years in long overcoats with black satin and cotton hats on their heads were gathered around there where they pushed each other and hit each other and made a lot of noise just as if the rabbi wasn't even in the same room with them. From time to time, when Pesach-Melamed just couldn't take it anymore, the noise and the uproar just got to him, he raised his disciplinary whip, a goat's foot with 12 thick tails, just like you raise up a flag, and peered over his brass spectacles with ferocity, in his pale, parchment dry face, and when he did that it became so quiet in the room that you could hear people breathing. Little boys sat down again, very quietly, like little statues, and with nervous hands held on to the edges of their desks. They cast terrified glances at the Rabbi wondering if he was going to get up, as he did, in these situations, and give somebody a good licking.

Because of this whip and because of that ferocious glance of his, Yarme-David decided to entrust his sons to the old Pesach-Melamed. He thought that he could

really handle kids, that he wouldn't take any nonsense. The new fashions, modern reading desks, which the Rabbi had to install in order to comply with the regulations of the state, and he also had teaching there a couple of teachers who had German style caps on their heads and black pinch-nez and they taught the children Polish, although that part of it was a big flaw to Yarme-David, instead of something positive, he liked the school because of its old fashioned methods. Pesach-Melamed's whip, in Yarme-David's mind, overcame all the other flaws of the school. Although in other schools he would only have had to pay half as much tuition for his kids, Yarme-David skimped on the little bit of bread that he did have and sent his kids to Pesach-Melamed. The older kid, Leibel-Moshe, was already there and he already needed to begin studying Gemorah. The other one, Avram-Yankel, was there in his third year. Now he was bringing his third son, Natan-Chaim. "Here he is, Reb Pesach, teach him Jewishness", he said, sitting down his kid, who was all sweaty and silent and full of held back tears. "The most important thing, Reb Pesach, don't spare the whip!"

Yarme-David was all worked up and full of sweat and angry from trying to deal the whole way with his kid, who had been kicking him and fighting with him with his little fists, just trying to get out of his grasp the whole time. "Here you are, you little piece of goy, here you are in the heder", he screamed at his son, and slapped him on his hands, on his clenched up resentful quiet little face, which was stubbornly holding back his tears.

His arrival at the heder with this struggling little boy under his arm, had caused a sudden silence to descend on everything. The students, who had just been singing and studying and rhythmically moving back and forth suddenly were absolutely silent with terrified eyes. They looked at the Jew with the red beard, who was panting so hard and wiping his angry face with his shirt.

Pesach-Melamed pushed the brass spectacles onto his brow and slowly turned his easy chair closer to Natan-Chaim. He stroked his clenched up, silent little face and he raised his chin and asked him with a lot of softness in his voice. "What's your name, little boy?"

Instead of answering, little Natan-Chaim pushed the old man's hand away from his head and he turned around so that he would not have to look at either his father or the old Jew with the white beard.

"Oh, he really is a little goy." Pesach-Melamed said to Yarme-David.

"You play around with him", Yarme-David said in a very worried way to his son. "You play around with him, and you'll see what he can do with that thing in his hand!"

"Now, now." The older Pesach waived that away with his pale yellow hand. "Just leave him alone for a minute. He'll be able to talk, you'll see." And to show the little kid what he meant by what he said, he raised up his whip in front of Natan-Chaim's face, "You see little boy", he warned him, "if a little boy is stubborn, we lay him down, we roll up his shirt, and we give it to him!"

Natan-Chaim wanted to run away, but the old man was quick enough to grab him by one of his little hands and sit him down in his lap and keep his little legs there between his two bony knees.

Just then, the little boy began to try and tear away from and punch the old man, screaming as loud as he could, letting out all the stuff he'd been keeping in. "I don't want to be here! Mommy!"

In his hitting the old white Jew, the little boy didn't see his father taking off, but even if his father were there, he wouldn't have turned to him for help. Only his mother. "Mommy, I don't want to be here!"

Pesach-Malamed, although he could be a very angry Jew at times, who was quite used to raising up his whip and using it, decided to try to deal with his new little pupil with good will. From long years of experience he knew, with a boy like this, it was better to try and win him over.

"You see, little boy", he pointed with his finger to the ceiling, "if you really want to study, an angel is going to drop a penny down for you". And in order that the little boy should really believe him, he right away took out a copper penny from his jacket pocket and let it fall from his raised hand onto the table with a little ping.

The child opened his eyes. He looked up a few times, to the blue plaster of the ceiling. Afterwards, he tried to take the little coin in his hands, looking at the same time with distrust on the Jew with the white beard.

"Take it, take it", the old man encouraged him. And he himself got hold of the big alphabet chart from the wall. "So, little boy," and he turned to little Natan-Chaim, "now take a look here".

And he pointed with his great bone pointer to the Aleph-Bet. "Do you see the little head on the top, and the little feet on the bottom? That's an Aleph. Say after me, Aleph. And the little open box, do you see that? That's a Bet. Say it loud, Bet."

Natan-Chaim liked that game. All at once, he forgot his stubbornness and he himself began to trace with his little finger the Aleph-Bet and pick out the letters which his mother and brothers had from time to time, taught him.

"That's Kuf", he said loudly and happily, and pointed to the big Kuf. "That's a Lamed, that's a Fay!"

Pesach-Melamed's troubled face lightened up quite a bit. "Ach, you are a good little boy", he said to him lovingly, and stroked the red, over heated little face. "Now come with me." He took the child off his lap and took him by the hand and led him among the rows of study desks, over to Avram-Yankel, his older the brother, who the whole time had been sitting very quietly and looking at what had been going on with his little brother.

"Sit here", the old teacher said to his new little student. "If you follow and you really want to study, the angel always throws pennies down to you."

MEMORIES FROM THE FIRST WORLD WAR

BY RABBI AVRAHAM SHMELTZSTEIN

When the First World War started, our city, which was adjacent to the fortress, was full of soldiers; we saw danger around the corner, in the houses, in the fields and everywhere.

On the second day of the Succoth holiday, there was a horrible message, "Jews get out of the city within four hours--Nobody is allowed to stay." Fear and anxiety spread among us. It rained heavily outside and it was impossible to rent carriages. Those who had carriages only took care of themselves and the police hurried the inhabitants to leave the city because the enemy was close to the fortress. We left our houses and the rest of our property behind. We only took our immediate belongings and started to walk out of the city. Some people requested to rest a little bit but the road was very muddy from the non stop rain. There was no place to rest.

We suddenly saw a gentile farmer passing by. We stopped him and promised him 3 rubles if he promised to carry the kids on the carriage. "Damn you Jews," cried the farmer. "You Jews helped the Germans with money and you asked for the War. Go to them and they will help you now." We finally arrived at another empty city and we visited the house of one of my relatives. We took our wet clothing off and sat down to eat the holiday dinner unhappily. However, even in this city we couldn't find rest. Within a few days the police ordered us to leave the city since it was also too close to the fortress. We finally managed to rent carriages and started our move to the more remote city, Zjelechow.

On the way we suffered a lot from the Russians and Poles. We were stopped by two soldiers on the way out who angrily said, "You damned Jews, why do you reveal all our government secrets to the enemies?". We replied, "These are all lies, look, we are exactly like you, standing shoulder to shoulder in battle, and many of us Jews end up killing each other in order to save our government."

They finally left us alone and as we traveled we eventually arrived at a Cossack camp. They stopped us and ordered us to get off the carriages because the horses could not pull cruel, bad Jews. We ended up walking by foot for quite a distance, we passed by Polish workers who threw stones at us and pieces of soil. We finally arrived at a city and found that it was even more difficult to live there. The city was full of refugees from nearby towns and the prices were very high. Everything was very expensive. We could not find places to live or any available apartments, even though we were willing to pay full price. We ended up sleeping on the floors. One morning we woke up to a horrible message that in our town

Demblin many houses were robbed and burned. We immediately rented carriages and drove all the way to Demblin to check out the situation.

By evening we arrived in the city as the explosions and the lightening of the guns sounded in the background. We hurried to hide in one of the houses of one of the Jews who had a license to stay in the city. But we immediately were stopped by two soldiers who stood on guard and called a higher officer. The higher officer turned to us and asked us in a rough voice, "How did you dare come to this city in war time? Don't you know that Jews are forbidden to enter any city close to the fortress?" But as soon as we handed him all our documents showing that we were house owners who had come back to rescue the little that we had left, he left us alone.

I entered my house and it was empty of the merchandise from the grocery store that we had there. Even the furniture had disappeared and only a few clothes and pillows were left behind. Even the book cabinet in our library was destroyed. I then started to cry and felt very depressed about the loss of the most precious manuscripts and books that I had enjoyed reading and looking at, including five books that I wrote. I immediately gathered the few remaining and escaped from this hell.

A month later the enemy was defeated and many of the Jews were allowed to return to their towns. We stayed in the city until the end of the year.

Many Jews suffered a lot from the treatment by the Russian soldiers and their clerks. They slaughtered and hanged many of the innocents without inquiring about their involvement in the cause. In one of the villages nearby the city, Stashov, they attacked a synagogue on Yom Kippur. On that day 11 innocent Jews were hanged who were accused of setting fire to a Polish farmer's house.

In many cases we were exposed to the danger of death. One day a clerk entered my store and bought three stacks of wheat and paid me by credit. Half an hour later he returned with soldiers and claimed that by mistake he overpaid me by 15 rubles and he wanted his money back. I showed him the credit documents and asked him to leave me alone. Even my wife started to cry in front of him and said, "Here you are about to go to a war, is that the time to steal and loot from us?" But he insisted, "You're either going to give me your money or death." His soldiers immediately pulled out their swords and threatened us. My wife called the high officer to judge the situation, however, he replied, "This guy is about to go to a war and I don't have jurisdiction over him. If he and his soldiers end up hurting you, it is your responsibility." I ended up paying him my money against my will, so as to keep away the death threat from my wife and me.

One day a Cossack bought sugar from me. After a little while, the Cossack appeared claiming that I gave him very low quality sugar. He screamed and yelled

that all the Jews are liars and immediately pulled out his sword threatening to stab me. My wife cried in front of him and said, "Here is your sugar and here is some money, just get out of here". However, he was still very mad and insisted on stabbing me. To my fortune, he looked outside for a moment and I took advantage of the situation and ran away.

In another situation I took a train ride from Warsaw to my town. I sat on a bench and read a newspaper. In front of me sat a bunch of young Poles arguing about the War. They got into a heated argument and screamed that only the Jews were to blame for the War because they send money and funds to the enemies and reveal the secret of our government. They also said the Jews run away from the War claiming that they are sick.

When I heard all of this I got really hurt and I couldn't hold it in anymore. I told them, "These are all lies and have no proof. We Jews always try to seek the support and peace of our government and we never send money to the enemies, let alone telling any secrets to the enemies. Also if you look you can see that our sons are standing shoulder to shoulder with your sons in the front. So why do you blame us about things that we never did?" They all of a sudden turned back to me and said, "Sir, you are under arrest, we are secret police from the government, here are our certifications." I immediately replied that I did not talk against our government and they could not arrest me. "You will explain all of this in court", they replied. I tried to beg them to leave me alone and have mercy on me, my wife and my sons but it was useless. They did not listen to me, however, one of them whispered in my ear, "For 100 rubles you can save you soul, and if not I'll tell in court that you cursed the King, and you know what the results will be." I felt very scared and depressed and I started to put together the 100 rubles. But then immediately one of them who looked beaten up and had a bandage on his head turned to me and said, "Here are your certificates and you are free to go." I blessed him for saving me from these hoodlums and I ended up arriving home peacefully.

At the end of the year there was another order from the Russian government to get out of the city. However, we had enough time to rent carriages and take our belongings with us. We drove to the city Lublin and we stayed at my wife's sister's house. A month later we found out the cities Demblin and Lublin were conquered by the Austrians and Warsaw was conquered by the Germans.

Later, we happily returned to our city. We realized that the houses were not burned down and everybody was greeting everybody with "Mazel Tov" since we got rid of the cruel Russians. The new rulers, although they were not as wild and cruel as the Russians, since they were more educated and polite, they made new laws that very few could stand and could survive those tough laws. They restricted and stopped trade completely and caused hunger around the countryside. At the same time they put together new laws to keep the cities from

theft and murder. During the rules of the Austrians and the Germans, there were not so many reports about an Austrian soldier killing a Jew as there were so readily during the Russian rule.

The kings of the coalition decided to revive the small nations that were conquered under the superpowers and tried to return their lands. On November 2, 1917 the British government came up with the Balfour Declaration that said, "The government of his majesty is looking toward the establishment of a national home in the land of Israel, on the condition they will not harm the rights of the citizens and the religion of the non-Jewish minority in the land of Israel."

(Recorded by Andjza Shmeltzstein-Tishman)

WHAT I REMEMBER OF MY HOME TOWN

BY ANDZJA SHMELTZSTEIN-TISHMAN / TEL AVIV

Dedicated to the holy memory of my dear family, beloved friends and acquaintances.

The memories of our beloved town Demblin, the life of her Jewish inhabitants and the activity and society there, are both at the same time sweet memories of my youth and also bring forth bitter tears when I think about the destruction.

Who can write about Demblin and not think that the town was destroyed, wiped out, in the Second World War?

There was a town, Demblin, once upon a time, with an idealistic youth, with a beautiful Jewish life, Jewish mothers took great care and were very tender with their children. Jewish fathers worked very hard for a little bit of bread and Jewish men and young women carried in their hearts great concern for the fate of the world.

When I start to tell this story, I remember the youth of Demblin and the tears begin to flow for our own who in the most terrible kinds of suffering ended their lives, who fell during death marches, when the whole mass of Jews from Demblin were driven by the Nazi dogs, and others who were burned in gas chambers.

FORCED LABOR - 1914 VERSION

The year 1914 came. At the threshold of the little Zionist synagogue, where my father prayed, Russian police showed up and led away all the men from 17 years old to 50 years old. It should be understood, of course, that everybody was extremely frightened not knowing what was going to happen to them. But what could you do? When they told you to walk, you had to walk. Do you think they had a choice?

They led them on the road to Ryki to guard the highway, bridges and the telegraph lines, so that a spy or saboteur shouldn't be able to damage them. Everybody was given a certain responsibility and they had to stand watch for 12 hours. They were covered with sweat. What were they supposed to do if somebody showed up and started to rip away at the telegraph wires? But, as Jews say, God is a father and creates miracles.

Of course, since they didn't get a chance to close their eyes for 12 hours marching back and forth as they had to, at the end of that time they were finally

all worn out and squeezed dry, went home, ate a little bit and napped. But it didn't take more than two hours before they started banging on the door. My father was very weak, he was barely able to stand on his feet. We had a little place under the roof, where one person could fit and be hidden and we were able to stick our father in there.

The soldiers came into the house, looked everywhere, until they found my father. They smacked him around as they led him to the Vistula. They put a pick and shovel in his hand and ordered him to dig trenches.

A number of the younger people escaped when it got dark, but my father decided that a Jew shouldn't do such a thing because if he did, they would accuse all the Jews of being spies.

Heavy rain began to soak everybody, but this didn't stop the soldiers from having a good time at the Jews' expense. Finally they let him go from this back breaking labor. My father decided that in the future he was going to forego his patriotism for the country and instead concentrate on saving his own skin.

For another week my father hid out in the attic, but he got very sick because of that. They brought a famous doctor from Warsaw because, among us, *Zalman Feltcher-Vanapol* [folk doctor] and Dr. Zochatsky, were the only ones available. When you wanted a good doctor, you had to travel to Warsaw.

I remember the peasants, the hens and roosters, the pigs and rabbits in cages in the Demblin market place. We lived in the market place. We had a snack bar. The peasants from the surrounding country side came and bought stuff from us, and they also used to come in and eat a little something and drink and eat some sausage. My father always told them they should not give me anything, but they always took pleasure in giving me a little bit of schnapps and watching me start coughing like crazy.

Once, when the Czar ruled Poland, an officer came into our store, started screaming that my father had not given him five rubles of change that he was entitled to. He pulled out his sword and he was about to go for my father. The children started to cry and my mother begged him, "We'll give you 50 rubles, 100 rubles, just leave my husband alone".

The officer didn't want to hear anything and he ordered my father to go with him. We knew that to go with him meant that you'd never come back. Acquaintances among the peasants who were hanging around began to beg the officer as well and tell him that they knew my father and that they were absolutely sure that he had no intention of cheating him. They told the officer to check his pockets one more time. After a great deal of effort they succeeded in calming him down and the officer left.

CZARIST EXPULSION

When the First World War broke out and the Russians began to suffer great defeats at the front, a Czarist officer, a notorious anti-Semite, was transferred from the front to our region. The first order that he gave was that all of the Demblin Jews (Modzjitz/Ivangorod) had to leave the town because it was close to the fortress and the Jews would give out all of the secrets of the fortress.

When the enemy was driven away again, he let the Jews come back. This happened on three occasions. The third time around, the biggest part of the group of Jews went to Ryki because it was close to Demblin.

We stored Abelah Brownshpigel's stuff in our cellar. My father hid all of his religious books because for him they were a treasure. Some of them he'd written himself and had them printed. We secured the house with iron bars and hit the road. We weren't able to find any wagons.

When they drove the Jews out, it was always raining, just as if God himself wanted to accompany us with tears.

We were still small children then, I and my sister Rivka, now in New York, and my brother Velvel, who lives in Brazil.

My brother was six months old and my mother carried him in a sheet tied to her back. The unpaved roads were very, very slippery, and we'd fall often, get smeared with mud, and get up and go on. My mother slipped and fell into a deep ditch. The sheet came loose, but my little brother fell on the grass and we lifted him up as if nothing had happened.

We continued walking. Our little hands were red with cold. We arrived in Ryki and there wasn't any place for us there because there were so many people who had fled and gathered there. When we were finally able to get a hold of a wagon we went to Zjelechov, my mother's home town. That was a little bit better. My mother had acquaintances there and rented a place to stay. We arrived on Friday evening. My mother quickly blessed the candles and very, very tired, we all lay down on the earth. On the Sabbath my father went to synagogue and good people brought us something to eat.

NEW RULERS - AUSTRIANS AND POLES

When the Austrians took Demblin, Jews came back. Lots of houses had been burned. There was enormous destruction in the town. In the neighborhood where we lived, houses remained intact, but everything was smashed up and robbed. From our house they stole windows and doors. It looked like they'd used the

place for a horse stall. Also from the cellar, everything had been taken out. The religious books were covered with all kinds of colors because they really didn't have any use for them. It seems that while they were leaving Demblin, the Russians had very, very rarely left the houses intact.

Little by little, everything got re-established. We rebuilt the houses, did business, but people lived in fear that the regime would change hands again.

In all of the dwellings soldiers were put up. At our house there were two soldiers. We got along with them all right. They made sure that the other soldiers would leave us alone.

Once, on a particular occasion at night, we heard shooting not far from us. Our soldiers, the guys that stayed with us, weren't there at that time. They were off on a watch. In the morning we found out that our two soldiers decided that they wanted to rob the store of Nach Seigelman. When he discovered them he began to scream. His daughter Sarah came out on the balcony and started to scream too. One of the soldiers, as he was leaving, saw her there and shot her. The bullet hit her in the stomach.

In 1919, when the Bolsheviks attacked Poland, Demblin was in a panic. People walked around fearing for their lives. My parents were afraid for their young children.

[See PHOTO-A2 at the end of Section A]

My sister Rivkala was 13 years old then. She only read Polish books. She finished her elementary school and wasn't able to study any more because there wasn't any high school in Demblin. But she really wanted to study and to continue her education.

When the Jews became upset and felt insecure, my parents decided that they wanted to save their oldest child. At that time it wasn't difficult to go to America. I had two brothers there, Yitzhak and Chaim. They wrote that Rivkala should come to America. And using that letter as a guide, my parents sent her away from Poland. My mother took her to Danzig and put her on a ship.

When my mother came back there was a tremendous commotion in the town. They were taking people to forced labor. But she managed to make it home. We all went at that point to Lublin, where my mother had a sister. We were there for 6 months and we sold soap in the streets. When things got quieter we traveled back to Demblin.

MY FATHER

My father was born in Pulaw, not far from Demblin. His parents were very religious, but very poor. My father was very intent on learning and he was smart and he studied alone on his own, day and night.

As time went by, my father became acquainted with various Zionists who had come from other towns and cities and countries to agitate and organize. My father was a passionate supporter of Zionism. After he got married, he came to Demblin and had a food store. During all of these years, he worked and agitated for Zionism. In those times it wasn't so easy to be a Zionist in a *shtetl* [town] like Demblin. The Jews were fanatical Hasidim and they didn't permit any Zionist thoughts or activity.

My father was a very pious man but not a fanatic. He corresponded with great personalities in the world and he entertained various delegates at the Zionist conferences and he himself became famous and well known and popular in the region.

Little by little his influence in the town grew stronger and he was the guide for both young people and adults. When parents learned that their children had been ruined because of my father they wanted to excommunicate him.

He also had to endure quite a bit of trouble from his own pious family. They did what they could to interfere with his work, the Zionism and Israel.

He began to write his first book about Zionism. He spent whole nights writing.

The fanatical parents of his wife told her to turn out his kerosene lamp so that he shouldn't be able to write and she did it. He suffered from all directions, but he never gave up. He had a lot of pupils and supporters and he imparted to them much wisdom and knowledge and love and idealism for Israel.

His first wife died and he remained with four sons, Yankel, Chaim, Yitzhak and Shmuel, none of whom are alive.

He married another woman, Krusa, my mother. The number of detractors shrank and the ranks of his supporters grew. The town gave into him.

My father became a delegate to the Zionist Congress in Bassel, along with Dr. Herzl. He had a lot of friends there and acquaintances and a lot of people already knew him from having heard him, others from correspondence.

My father raised money for Israel, he founded a little Zionist synagogue in Demblin where all those who had nationalist points of view could come and pray and run

into each other. They were active together in the Zionist circles, together with my father, his best friend, Yosef Gilibter and Hershel Nisenboim, who was my father's pupil and great supporter.

My father published several books in Hebrew in Demblin. When the doors of Israel opened he began to think about settling in Israel, in the land for which he'd fought so much and given so much effort to sustain. They used to say to him, "Rev Avromele, half of Israel has to be yours, since you've already raised so much money for it."

In 1925, my father decided to sell everything and leave. But we didn't have enough money. At that time pioneers were allowed to travel who had already received certificates, or capitalists. We did not have the 500 pounds to travel as capitalists.

With the help of the Rabbi of Kozjenitz, a society was founded which sold land in Israel. A lot of people contributed. There was money in a safe and with that money they sent the first people who had paid a specific sum. And the rest was paid by the society.

My father was very happy. He was one of the first four families. We began to prepare to leave. I, however, felt very bad about it. I wanted to stay in town with my good friends and acquaintances. I was very tied up in the Union which had been founded not too long before. (In the directorship of the Union were Avigdor Berkowitz, Shmuel Kotsky, Michael and Avram Abramowitz.) There was a reading hall there. Each evening people came together to talk and we had the little box evenings.

THE PROFESSIONAL UNION

Once when there were 20 of us in the Union Hall, the police came and arrested everybody. They led us through the streets to the police station. Some of us had political material with us and they confiscated it while we were walking. They took us into a separate room and interrogated and searched everybody, but they didn't find anything. We stayed there the whole night. In the morning they let us go home.

Of course, my parents thought that I was pursuing a dangerous and bad path in my life. All they dreamed of was going to Israel. But I was stubborn, I argued about it, I said I wasn't going to go. Of course they didn't want to leave me there either. Anyway I had to begin to learn a trade, to sew and wash, from Faiga Rozenberg. After that I was able to support myself.

We had relations with the Union in Gniveshov. When there was a question evening there or a performance, we would rent a wagon and travel there then come back late at night. They also used to come to us and we had a great time. We lived well and we weren't worried about things. That was my best time.

But materially, the conditions in the town were very bad. I remember on Friday before it got dark, Ruchela Bines used to send me out with another girl to get pieces of bread and challah which they would then divide up among the poor and needy families.

I knew the whole town, which numbered 3,200 Jews. I knew where everybody lived. We were all very intimate and comfortable with each other and liked each other. There wasn't any electricity. On winter nights the streets were covered with snow. The young people would go out in the streets and have snow ball fights. In the early years, when we wanted to see a movie picture, we had to go into the fortress which was pretty far away.

On Sabbath after eating, I and my pals like Pesah Buckshpan and Faiga Wochman, used to walk over to the fortress to see a film. There were films which they wouldn't let us into because we were too young. In order to seem older and taller we stood on our tiptoes and that helped. Afterwards they built in Demblin a platform in the middle of the street where people performed little plays on their own and they also showed movies there. Several drama circles were founded which often performed on this stage. They became famous for their plays. These were some of the people who made a reputation for their ability to act, Chana Goldberg, Ruchtsia Beigelman, Rafel Beigelman, Malka Beitshman, Chana-Gitel Wasserman and Andzja. The Vilna troop also used to come sometimes and perform plays there.

Afterwards, electric lights were installed but only in the streets. In the houses people still used kerosene lamps.

On the Sabbath, people used to walk out to the big Demblin forest, with tall pine trees. Young and old used to meet each other there in order to breath in the fresh air, sing, or listen to a little lecture. Nobody interfered with us. People would lie down on a blanket. A lot of people didn't bother to do that. They'd take a little pillow with them and make themselves comfortable reading a book. After that we'd walk a little bit further to the orchards with all kinds of fruits where you could buy fresh fruit just picked. When the night began to fall, the roads, which led to Demblin, were black with people walking back.

THE BURIAL SOCIETY

I remember the role that the Burial Society played in our town. The people who directed this organization were well to do, people of wealth and substance. When

somebody died they would quickly have a get together until midnight and calculate how much money had to be charged the family of the person who had died. The sums of money for this purpose were extremely great. But if the family didn't want to pay that much, they let the dead body lie around for three days. After that, somebody or other would put in the required money. The corpse was put on a wagon with a little horse and the family and friends were allowed to go as far as the crooked tree. That's exactly half way on the road to the cemetery. Only the closest men to the dead person were allowed to accompany the person the second half of the way with another wagon to Bobrownik, to the cemetery.

Once a year, the Burial Society balanced their books and figured out what they had left and then had a big feast for the members. The women worked in the kitchen over fish and meat the whole day. They baked all kinds of goodies. Often the feast was held at Abeleh Brownshpigel's house. He lived two doors from us. I was very young then. I used to like to go over and see this big ball. They didn't let any outsiders in. They really didn't want anybody to see just exactly what was going on in there. People ate and in a very elegant way, drank booze. Afterwards, people would, in an inebriated state, dance until the white of day. This was, of course, with the money which they had collected from the town during the course of the year. They were very powerful and everybody was afraid of getting involved with them because, what would happen to them at the appropriate moment?

[See PHOTO-A3 at the end of Section A]

THE SYNAGOGUE

The majority of the Jews from Demblin spent their Sabbaths and the long winter nights in the synagogue. The yeshiva men who were studying sat around all day. As one walked by, one could hear sweet melodies through the windows. By the oven, poor people sat with their hands and their backs on the oven and they listened to the holy word of the young men who were yeshiva students. They themselves weren't able to study because even as children they'd had to work in order to help their parents make a living. During a pause in their studying, a little bit of commotion erupted. People got quite over heated and there would be gossip spread around and talk about people who had converted.

Once, a rich man from our town came to the Rabbi of Demblin, and asked him to choose from among the yeshiva students, a groom for his daughter. He wanted to take this son-in-law as a groom. The Rabbi chose the oldest yeshiva student, who was not quite 18 years old yet, and said, "Here he is". And that's the way it was.

Poor people used to come to town who would travel from one place to another, begging alms. Once a year they would travel home to their families and give them

the little bit of money that they were able to get a long the way. After that they picked up their pack and hit the road again. When guests like these hadn't left the town before the Sabbath, they remained and they waited at the door of the synagogue for a householder to take them home to their meal on Friday evening.

They slept in the synagogue. Very often there was conflict among them about who got to sleep close to the oven, because that's where it was warmer. They put a little sack with a couple of rags under their head, stretched out on the hard bench, and went to sleep, snoring away.

My father prayed in a little Zionist synagogue. There these wandering people did not show up. When he passed the main synagogue and saw these wanderers who nobody had come to take home with them, my father invited them to our house, or he led them to somebody else's house so they could eat on the Sabbath.

The poor people knew that in Demblin, nobody was allowed to go hungry on the Sabbath. And they came from other towns to us on the Sabbath. They were often treated by the same families. They told about the news of the region and about what was happening in the wide world.

PURIM IN THE TOWN

The streets and the homes were joyful and lively. Workers and yeshiva students used to disguise themselves and in their disguises gather money for different kinds of charitable projects. Some of them were poor people who had been people of wealth once a upon a time and who themselves were ashamed to ask for a hand out. During Purim people raised a little bit of money for them so that they could have a descent Purim. The people who were disguised in costumes were impossible to identify. They danced, they sang, they put on Purim plays and they went about collecting what money they could.

At our house, the whole family sat at the table. A plate with money sat on the table. People went in and out and everybody divided it up. Everybody was happy and content. It was a very joyful time.

The Purim players went the breadth and length of the town. It was a really beautiful and happy holiday. People talked about Purim gifts. In this way children would make a living. We'd carry good things to friends and relatives in dishes, little candies, underneath a very clean, white cloth. For their trouble the children were given little pieces of fruit cake or a coin. The children's wish was that Purim would never end.

Late at night, the whole family sat down at the table to eat a feast, raisin challah, stuffed bread, hamantashen, honey cakes, everything so sweet. We ate and we drank and we got drunk.

GHOSTS

We lived in the center of the town. We had a food store. Our door was always open for anybody to come in and out. All of the wagon drivers and the porters stood by our door. They were there in the winter and liked it in there because they could keep warm. Whenever anybody needed a wagon driver and a wagon, they knew already that they had to come to our place to find them. My father was like a father not only to his own children, but to all the Jewish people. Many of the porters had families in America and they didn't know how to write. They used to come to me so that I would write Yiddish letters for them. They didn't know what to write. I had to know and find out and understand what they wanted to say in their letters.

The neighboring house came right up on our courtyard. This was a two story house. People said that ghosts ran around in the house at night in the attic on the stairs. We heard sounds on the stairs that sounded like goats. Once a man was seen, wrapped in a sheet, as he left the house.

During the day I often used to go into that house, but when it would start to get dark, I was afraid to go home and would ask anybody to go with me. Even when I got older and started to go to the Union meetings which took place in the neighboring courtyard of Simchela, the black one, and I came home late at night, I was still frightened and would always ask for somebody to accompany me to the door and wait until I was in the house. When I walked by myself I'd run to the door, not turning my head around to that house. I'd reach my house and go inside out of breath. I personally never saw or heard the person who was running up and down the stairs during the night. But people said that they did see ghosts. The people talked about that quite a bit and people really believed in spirits.

The story behind all this apparently was that once upon a time there lived a fairly wealthy woman there. She rented out several houses and she had a food store. A widow with several children came to her and asked her for alms, but she didn't want to give her anything. Once a poor man came into her store and asked for alms. When she didn't want to give him anything, he cursed her and said she should only trade in ghosts. People even said that at night little candles were seen burning in the store.

THE TEACHER AND THE ANGEL OF DEATH

There was an old teacher in our town. He had a dog in his house, which at that time wasn't something that Jews did. His children spoke only Polish. You never

saw him in the synagogue. He even ate pig meat. Of course people looked at him askance and didn't want to talk to him. People avoided him all together. He gave Polish lessons in his house.

Once, when he became sick and wrestled with death for three days, as the story goes, the angel of death came in to have a little chat with him, "Angel of death, what do you want from me? There's nothing for you here. Leave me alone. I'm not going to go and pray, I'm not rich, so what do you want from me? I have an idea, go to Mendeleh, he is a fine man, he's pious and he has a lot of money. In him you have everything that you want. So go, and take his soul."

Once upon a time the teacher had a feud with Mendeleh but the teacher did not succeed. The same day he died.

THEY CALLED US LITTLE BOYS

Every Friday evening and Sabbath, my father used to take me and my sister, who is now in America, to the Zionist synagogue. We were still very small. Zalman Feltcher [the folk doctor] also prayed there. We always used to walk home together from the synagogue with him. On the way there were a lot of potholes and ones where we'd have to hop over, especially little kids. Feltcher would grab me by the arm and pick me up in order to get me over the ditch. On this particular occasion he really hurt my arm, he sprained it. I screamed and cried from the pain. "Oh, don't cry, I'm a doctor. I'll set your arm right again. You don't have to pay me any money."

On the Sabbath after a nap, my father taught Chumish and Hebrew to me and my sister. When we came to the passage where Joseph's brothers throw him into a hole, we would always cry. In the town, only boys studied Chumish. We were embarrassed and we didn't want anybody to hear we were studying it because they would call us boys.

All of the children went to *Zaydelah* [grandfather] who ran a heder [religious school]. I never got smacked with the whip once. When we began to cry the Rabbi threw down a little candy from above and said that the good angel threw that down. We also had to help the Rabbi's wife with different chores.

Near us lived a military tailor. All the officers from the fortress got their clothes sewed by him. He had two daughters and one son. It was very warm there during the winter. I used to go over there and play around with the children.

Once an officer came to order a uniform. All of the clients used to kid around with us children and he was talking to us also. Before going away he gave us money. He gave me a 10 cent coin and the tailor's daughter a 6 cent coin. When the

officer left, the tailor said to me, "Show me how much the officer gave you." And I gave him the coin. He also took the coin from his own child and afterward gave me back the 6 cent coin and his daughter the 10 cent coin. I didn't say anything because thanks to him I was able to get the couple pennies I got anyway.

NICKNAMES

Who in town didn't have a nickname? Sometimes they were comical, sometimes they were malicious. The nicknames remained from generation to generation, they were passed down from grandfather to grandson. When we were called by a family name, we didn't even know what was going on, because we were so used to our nicknames. I myself, when I went into somebody's house and somebody asked me, who's are you, I just said my nickname, because the family name, I didn't even know. That's the way we were used to doing things. Everybody had a nickname.

There were people called Sourcream, the Botschen, the Purim-salesman, the Flame, the Sniffer, Kliske, Shener the Wind (he got that because there was a fire and he came and said, "it's good that there's no wind"). The Petticoat (they called this person that because in the middle of the night there was a fire, and in his great hurry to get away he grabbed a woman's petticoat and ran through the streets that way).

And others: Rotzer, Dejzwein, Bandit, the Shtomt, and Motesh, Flock, Smack, Little Grandfather, Little Head, Teapot, Frozen, Little Daddy, and others. Most of the time, people weren't ashamed of these names.

If anyone is offended or insulted by my recording these nicknames, please forgive me.

WE MAKE ALIYAH TO ISRAEL

In 1925 my father seriously began to prepare to travel to Israel. We sold everything.

All of the porters and wagon drivers were standing around our house. They felt really sorry to see us go. They used to have a warm corner where they could go, especially in the winter, in the store which we ran. Every one of them loved my father because he always had a good word for everybody. He would lend money to people, especially the people who were really in need. He really helped anybody who stretched out their hand in need.

In the same way after Passover we traveled finally to Israel. The whole town came to our house to say good-bye, all of my acquaintances and friends from Demblin and from Gniveshov to say good-bye to us and to accompany us to the train. With a lot of feeling I said good-bye to them and promised never to forget them.

In Israel our house was open to all the people who arrived from Demblin and made it to Israel. My father was always interested in them and their pilgrimage as if they were his own children. I received many letters from my friends in Demblin. Each Sabbath, Landsmen, people from the old home, used to come by and eat with us and we'd swap news about what was going on in the old hometown. It was always possible to meet somebody or other who had just arrived at our house and from whom we always would receive greetings from the people who were close to us back home.

DEMBLIN-MODZJITZ 50 YEARS AGO

BY CHAIM-TRALER / PARIS

That which I will tell here about our home town isn't taken from any archival material, but it's from personal memories, as well as the things my own grandfather, Shmuen Zilberman (Shmuen Faker) and my father, Itche Pesach, used to tell me.

A YOUNG COMMUNITY

Demblin was situated about 50-60 kilometers to the east of Warsaw, on the road between Warsaw and Lublin. The official origin of the community comes from the fortress which was built by the Czar Alexander, after Russia had annexed most of Poland's territory. The Russians gave it the name of Ivangorod, the city of Ivan.

In general, our city had the good fortune to acquire names. Officially it was called Irena. The local Poles called it "Pezjedmeyeshtese" (little suburb). Among us, the Jews, it was called Modzjitz, a name to recall sweet, Hasidic melodies, not only among the Jews from Demblin, but the whole Jewish world. Demblin is a name that was given by the Austrians, in 1915, when the troops of Frantz-Yozef marched into town thinking that they would forever be its masters.

But, however many names it had, Demblin belonged to the newer Jewish communities of an ancient Poland. But, because of its youth, the community had its own face, its own identity, its uniqueness - the life of the people who lived there. It was a very pretty and productive community, with several hundred Jewish families, from various strains and directions, with a lot of different organizations, who of course, disputed among themselves, but were united in the face of danger.

THE FORTRESS AND TRAIN CENTER THE IMPORTANT SOURCES OF MAKING A LIVING

In the majority of towns and cities of Poland in that time, Jews made a living mainly from trading with peasants and from different kinds of crafts. Demblin, in hindsight, was an exception, because there, the most important sources of livelihood for the Jews were the fortress and the train center, which stimulated the growth of the town and her inhabitants, including the Jews.

A number of Jews, the rich ones, were suppliers for the daily needs of the clothing of the garrison at the fortress and for their families which lived there with

them. Other Jews, the poor ones, carried out illegal business in the liquor trade with the Russian soldiers. They, the Russian soldiers, would receive as part of their personal supplies a certain list of things that they needed to use, like boots and leather. They'd get it for half year or a whole year and then they'd sell it in order to have a few rubles, first of all, to have a drink. However, the simpler, common soldiers, were afraid to go into the liquor store and buy something to drink. The liquor store in those days was a state monopoly. So they let the word out that they'd pay Jews if they'd go in and buy the liquor for them. As a reward, the Jews would get the empty bottles which the state liquor store would refund for 3 kopeks a bottle.

Lets take note that in those times the liquor store was a monopoly which belonged to the regime which provided the concession to one of their servants. In Ivangorod, the person who ran the store was a very mean, lame person, a Russian chauvinist who hated both Jews and Poles although he lived among them and made a living from them.

The business of the liquor monopoly store of the state was found in the court yard of Yehoshe-Asheres where a little prayer house was also located. When my father used to go through the courtyard, the lame butler used to stop him and conduct long discussions about the Talmud. This person thought of himself as quite an expert on the Talmud and wanted to show off.

A second source of income for the Jews in Demblin, was, as I've said, the rail center, which included both the train station and a very important rail head, 2 or 3 kilometers from the town. There was always quite a bit of movement there, lots of passengers had to get on there or they would change locomotives there. Meanwhile, people would come into Demblin and they'd spend a night there, do a little shopping. There were a lot of people employed at the rail station, in different ways. Some of the people were workers, others were suppliers and contractors. There were people who had wagons which were made available to carry things back and forth. People who were porters would carry things on their backs.

Demblin Jews, of course, traded there, and worked for the surrounding peasants, supplied them with things. All in all, making a living in Demblin really wasn't that bad, while in other places, it was really, very, very hard. And the fact that it was relatively prosperous drew Jews from surrounding communities. Young Demblin grew, as if with yeast. It became, even in the time that I remember it, a substantial place because of all the new people who were coming in. In my family, for instance, my great-grandparents and my grandparents, 95% of them were people who had come from someplace else. My grandfather, Shmuen, used to often show me the houses which were built during the first Jewish immigration. The first Dembliner Rabbi, Rabbi Yisrael Taub, wasn't a native Dembliner.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

This young community was first dominated in the early times by the Hasidic world, perhaps even more than other Polish towns in the same era. The center of spiritual, religious life was the synagogue. The majority of the people of substance who owned things in the community sent their sons there to study. But there was no lack of boys who were the sons of craftsman or just common workers. Demblin brought forth a big number of scholars who became Rabbis, *Shochets* [ritual slaughterers]. They went and served in other communities. For instance, Reb Gimaliel, who became the Rabbi in Chelm; Reb Zilka, who was the Shochet in Kojenitz, and others.

Us little kids learned in heders, although they were technically forbidden by the Czar's government. From time to time, a school inspector would come into town. The religious teachers had usually been forewarned about such an inspection, and we used to take the day off from school. As a result of this, when we had the day off, we were extremely happy little kids, we didn't have to go to heder. In later times, the heders were tolerated by the regime, with the condition that they would teach Russian. My grandfather, from my father's side, Pesach Melamed, had such a heder, in a big house. On the walls hung a portrait of the Czar. The whole house was full of unfinished wooden desks and benches. Twice in a week teachers came to teach the kids Russian. We did not, as a result, become very proficient in Russian.

That's the way it looked, once upon a time, in our town of Modzjitz. Life went its way. One day was very similar to the next. It gave the appearance of water that didn't move. But that was something else. Over the land, the storm of 1905 had begun to come closer. Its echo and winds reached us and penetrated even into the synagogue.

When the revolution of 1905 broke out, its greatest adherents among us were two yeshiva students, the sons of Reb Elis, Yankev Shmeltzstein and others. After the revolution was squashed, they went out into the world. But the sparks that they had spread continued to simmer. Lots of students lost interest in their religious studies, started to wear short coats instead of Hasidic ones, and to read forbidden, secular kinds of books. In the town they were known as "*Apikorsim*" [people who renounce their religion]. (Leibel Brownstein, Moshe Puterflam). A lot of different groups and organizations sprang up. Some of them revolutionary, some of them Zionist, some of them territorialists. It's interesting that the adherents from all of these different groups came from the yeshiva. Shmerl Rappaport is now in England. Efraim Traler, Alter Rubenstein, David Cholovinsky, Yichiel Shorfhartz, Leibel Bubis (all of these people were killed by the Nazis).

As I was told, my father, the son of Itche Pesach, and Reb Nuach Siegelman, were among the first adherents of the enlightenment in the town. In the evenings one

was able to come together, talk about a number of different things that were going on in the world. After my father's death, Reb Nuach would often stop me in the street and talk to me with great respect about my father. In this way, I was always known as the Rebbitzes son, not by my own name. This was, I presume, a way of honoring my father, who was respected as one of the great Torah scholars of the town. Let me take the opportunity here to recall that my father died at the very robust age of 47. Our family knew, as well as the whole town, that he had been working over a translation of the bible into Russian. The manuscript later disappeared under very mysterious circumstances after my father's death.

The spiritual leader of the Zionists in town, was Avramela Shmeltzstein (Avramela the Purim Socher). He started a little prayer house and he would give a sermon there every Sabbath.

Modzjitz was well known and famous in the whole Jewish world because of the melodies of its Rabbi, Reb Yisrael, who was a very, very talented and original creator of many Hasidic pieces of music, which he collected and presented in his very unique way.

The Rabbi had a big courtyard. In the front of it stood one building where he lived with his family. In the courtyard was the Rabbi's synagogue, behind it, an orchard with fruit trees. In the synagogue, one didn't study and read like one did in other synagogues, but everyday, a *minyán* [10 men] of Hasidim would come together there and pray. On the Sabbath there were quite a few others who would come together to pray. The person who led the prayers, as well as being the Cantor, was the Rabbi himself. Every Friday night he ate at the head of the table in the synagogue. The whole evening was filled with his song, accompanied by a choir of his children and grandchildren, who he directed. When this happened, during this singing, lots of children would collect under the windows outside, so they could hear what was going on. To our great resentment, we were always driven away.

In the fortress there was an ethnic Cossack with his own orchestra, who used to march through the town and play different marches. The Rabbi, at times like this, used to go out onto the balcony and play close attention to the different tunes. The next Friday night one would hear new melodies from him in which he'd incorporated the motifs and worked them in, in his own way.

IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, a hell began for the Jewish population of Ivangorod. Once, at this time, there was a lack of small change. Various shadowy personages took to going around to the Jewish stores, buying

little things, and demanding that they get their change in 3 ruble coins. When the Jewish store keeper explained that he didn't have that much change, they called the police, these people would come to hall out the Jews and beat them up. Just such an occurrence happened to my father. The "customer", when my father told him that he didn't have any change, brought in a Czarist gendarme, who whipped out his sword, waved it around over my father's head, screaming, "You Jewish spies, you're hiding money for the Germans!" My father became very sick as a result of this encounter.

In our store we had as a steady customer, the Commander Colonel, from the fort at Modliner. Every month he used to come and get supplies. This time when he came into the store he did not see my father, and he asked my mother what had happened. Her reply was that he was in bed. She didn't say anything else.

At that point, the Colonel went to our house, took a look at my father and said to him straight away, "What happened? Why are you sick. Tell me, who did this to you?" My father let him know that he wasn't going to tell, because he was afraid of revenge. I watched this whole scene happen. The Colonel got really mad. In sharp words he disciplined the people who had done this to my father.

A few days after this incident, the Jewish population of Demblin got an order to get out of town. My mother and the children went to Miechov-Luvelsky, but the majority of Jews went on foot to Ryki, spent the night there, and then continued their wandering into the surrounding little towns. Everything that they owned remained behind without any protection.

I and my father, because of an accident, remained in Demblin until the evening. As soon as it got dark, we went to Ryki on the highway, on which thousands of Cossacks were riding on their horses. Soon we started to hear cursing and threatening, and they were cursing and threatening us. Who knows what would have happened if it hadn't been for the intervention of my young Cossack, "Let the old guy and his kid go on their way!" The other Cossacks quieted down. We tried to stay as close as we could to this particular horseman the whole way. In this way we were able to arrive in Ryki after midnight.

Early in the morning, together with my grandfather, Shmuen, who had a wagon with a couple of horses, my Uncle Avram and his family, we went off to Miechov, on the highway that led from Ryki to Kotzk. On both sides of the road, there were thick forests.

Along the way we parted. My grandfather, grandmother and Uncle stayed in Liserieg. My father and I went to Miechov where my mother was with the other children. We stayed there a little bit of time, waiting until we were allowed to go back to our home town. The same sense of longing and hope was shared by all of the Jews who had been driven away from Modzjitz, who had been scattered

abroad in other little towns. We hoped that better times would come. In the meantime we suffered hunger and sickness and like hardships of the War.

A little bit later, when the Russian army pushed away the Austrians from Ivangorod, they allowed the refugees to return. Coming back home we saw a really horrible sight, as if an earthquake had occurred. Every little bit of the possessions of the Jews had been robbed and plundered. In many houses they took away the shutters, the windows and the doors. But we didn't allow ourselves to despair and we set out to fix our dwellings up again. But, just as soon as we got on our feet again, a second offensive by the Austrian army began. The cursed Czarist rulers, as they were getting knocked around considerably on the battle field, couldn't focus on any other thing but driving us Jews out of town. For us, it was a repeat of the tragic chapter of our wandering and homelessness. This time we went to Zjelechov. Other Jewish families who were driven away went to Kotsk, to Baranov and a lot of them went to Warsaw. The hunger and need of those who had been driven away is indescribable. Some of the sorrow and suffering was alleviated a little bit through the help received from Jews in Russia. But that was a drop in the sea.

A NEW SOURCE OF INCOME - SMUGGLING

Driving Jews away was done under the excuse that we were spies for the Germans. But their driving the Jewish spies away did not prevent them from suffering a terrible defeat. The Russian military was driven out of all of Poland. The Austrians came into Modzjitz. The refugees began to return home. Once again the same sorrowful picture greeted us when we returned. A part of the city had been burned. In the sections that had remained, there were many houses which had been wrecked to the ground. The people who came back tried to make a place for themselves, any way they could. But for the older people, as well as for the young people, a question immediately arose of, how do we make a living? Especially since most of the normal kinds of commerce and sources of livelihood had ceased to exist, because of the war conditions. It was a very, very difficult time. There was literally nothing to eat. After awhile things started to get back to normal, somewhat. Demblin was a border town between the zones which were occupied by the Austrians and the Germans and for her inhabitants, a new way of making a living opened up, and that was smuggling. Lots of Jewish families became involved in this. They simply had no other means of making a living.

Smuggling of course was not a good thing to do. But, in that time, you did what you had to do, whether it was a good thing to do, or whether it was an illegal thing to do. Under the existing conditions, people didn't dare engage in normal types of business. Performing any type of work was risky, because the occupying army managed to lay its hands on all goods, if they were farm goods, or leather,

manufactured goods, sugar, wheat. They would just confiscate anything that you tried to deal with for their own soldiers.

The most important item that people smuggled in our region was kerosene. People constructed special four-sided square tin cans with double bottoms and double walls, which were filled with kerosene. And loaded down this way, people made their way through forests and swamps, to the nearby town, Ryki, which at that point was part of what was called greater Germany. Each group of smugglers had their watch person and in case of danger, he gave special signals, which they already had agreed upon. Carrying these cans, one grew to fear more than any kind of wild beast, the two footed brutes of the border police. It's true, some of these people had been bribed. But others hunted down the "*Kontrabandeers*", and they would even shoot them, and then rip off what they were carrying. Two Jews died from their bullets.

A second root of smuggling was on the rail road. Flour and other food articles were smuggled to Warsaw and from there, materials and other kinds of things were brought back. So this was a two-way smuggling operation: from the surrounding little towns to Demblin, and from Demblin to Warsaw. The manufactured goods and the food stuffs, which one smuggled from one place to another, were wrapped around one's own body. The Austrian police, more than once took everything that we had, carrying out searches in our houses and just plundering whatever they could get their hands on.

THE NEW EPIC

Nevertheless, we never gave in to the occupying forces nor the bitter fate that we suffered during the war. Quite the contrary. We, the young people, used the little bit of freedom that we had, by comparison to the Czarists regime, to put together a real social and cultural life. We established a culture group with a very, very nice library, where the activists part of the youth used to come together. We rented a place, which was very close to the house of Lozer Ashminer. There, we would meet almost every evening. On Friday evenings, we used to have question times, or readings, often with speakers who had been brought down from Warsaw, and they would hold court on political and literary themes. A drama circle was created under the leadership of Rafael Baigelman.

In this way, past the first two years of the Austrian occupation until 1917, when, from Russia, we received the news about the great revolution. Even Demblin sensed the winds of a new era. We used to have discussions about the events in the neighboring country of Russia, where the revolution had just taken place, especially from the perspective of Jews. Trying to catch our breath, with great interest we followed the events in Russia and around the world.

Meanwhile, the Autumn of 1918 rolled around and with it the defeat of the German-Austrian forces. The occupiers left in a hurry, almost in a stampede of confusion. But, just as soon as they left, Pilsudsky's legions showed up and began to act out in a very ugly way, mainly against Jews. With terror, we received the news about pogroms, which had taken place when these fellows came to Lymberg. Among us as well, the dark forces began to raise their head. It got even worse when General Haler's army arrived in Poland. The members of General Haler's army came into Demblin and they cut Jews' beards. It was a very tense and uneasy time. But none of this could crush our aspirations to a better and more meaningful life. We, the youth of Demblin, were dedicated to broadening our horizons culturally and politically and through professional activity. We created unions and professional and working associations for tailors and shoemakers and carpenters. The first strikes broke out on behalf of an 8 hour work day, for better conditions and for higher wages and other things like that.

Not long thereafter, another war began, this time between Poland and Soviet Russia. Poland had just received her independence, after 150 years of being divided up under foreign rulers. The land was ruined as a result of warfare. We needed to rebuild the country and take care of the population, provide them work, give land to the peasants. But the new rulers, especially with Pilsudsky, considered it their most impressing and important task, to start a war with Russia.

I was, at that time, in a group called "*Priziv-Elders*" [like an ROTC program]. Like a lot of Demblin youth, I was mobilized into the Polish army, where I served from 1919 until 1922. After coming back from the military I remained in Demblin just a few months. I was drawn away, like a lot of young people, into the broader world.

OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR, AND AFTERWARDS

BY VELVEL TISHMAN / NEW YORK

I was born in Demblin in 1898. I remember the town at that time. There were Hasidim and business people and crafts people. It was a fine town. On holidays, the Hasidim would come to the Modzjitzer Rabbi. It was one of the greatest pleasures to hear him sing. The Rabbi was renowned as a great singer of Hasidic and secular melodies and songs. His melodies inspired everybody.

When the town was under Czarist rule, Jews suffered plenty. When the First World War broke out, a new chapter of sorrow began for the Jews in Poland. The Russians accused the Jews of being German spies. Many Jews were arrested and sent to Russia and thrown in prison there. The general situation for Jews was quite bad. In Demblin especially, Jews suffered because there was the Ivangorod fortress. The Jews received an order to get out of town in 2 hours. Of course this created a panic. A lot of people had to go on foot because there wasn't any time to get a hold of wagons, and of course in this situation we weren't able to take anything with us. People spread out in the surrounding little communities of Baranov, Zjelechow, Garvolin and a small group made its way to Warsaw.

There weren't any dwellings available. We had to make do in cellars and in attics. There wasn't any way to make a living either. We did not have what it took to buy even a little piece of bread.

Meanwhile, the Poles robbed everything they could get their hands on in the town we had left behind.

When the Russians drove the Germans away, we went back in to town. The town was desolate, everything had been plundered. The houses looked at if a pogrom had hit. Even the windows and doors had been torn out. Everything looked horrible.

We started to put everything back together again, but after a few weeks they drove us out again. We suffered on the road until in 1915 the Germans took Poland. Then things got a little bit better for Jews and that's the way things went until 1918.

When the Polish-Bolshevik War broke out, a new chapter of suffering began for the Jews. They beat and hunted down Jews and imposed very, very harsh taxes on them. They really wouldn't even let us live.

In this way one suffered until the Second World War, which of course hit the Jews harder than anybody. Six million Jews died and the whole world remained silent.

I, my wife, and our child of 5 months, left Demblin for America in 1921. We left parents and a sister in Demblin. My father was named Shmuen, my mother, Kreindel, and my sister, Yenta. she married Itche-Berrish Shtif. When the Second World War broke out, they had 4 children. He was a tailor.

My father had his beard torn out by the Poles. From shame and grief, he died later. My mother died in Demblin. My sister and her husband and their 4 children were sent to a camp. One child survived. She got married and is with us in America. My wife's parents were from Demblin. Her father was Simcha, the hat maker. She had two brothers, Shmuel and Shloma, and one sister, whose husband was called Moshe Nayman. They were all killed with their families. Shmuel had 9 children. Shloma and the sister had a big family. Not one of them remained alive. (Their family name was Wartzman.)

THE BEGINNING

BY MINDEL ZINGER / BRAZIL

The bare 50 years which separate me from the town of Demblin make my memories a little bit rusty. By a certain measure, maybe not so interesting. But for this book of recollections, which needs to be a monument to the brotherhood of our town's murdered Jews, I want to write something down anyway.

I will only focus in on 4 years of social activity in the town.

1914. Just after the outbreak of the First World War, the Jewish population, according to the orders of the Czarist regime, had to get out of town and leave behind whatever possessions they had. They were under orders to evacuate to the surrounding little towns, to get far away from the battle field. It was very difficult to survive, to find a place to lay your tired head, or get a bite to eat. The situation was very, very difficult. Jews went around quite desperate. But not the youth. They formed bonds and friendships with the youth of the towns in which they found themselves. Together they hatched plans for the future.

After a little while, the Russians succeeded in driving the Germans from the territory that they'd taken. After a little bit more wandering, we returned to our ravaged homes. Our homes at this point lacked the most basic necessities. But the youth refused to get all hung up in this sense of need, and they felt a different kind of need which was a need for culture. Their thoughts were full with ideas. They decided they had to do something in order to feed their cultural hunger. We decided, a group of young people, to create a library. When you say a library today, it sounds like a very simple thing. But in those days there were considerations, like what will our parents say about it and where are we supposed to get the money for such an idea. But our will to accomplish this was so strong that all of the little difficulties vanished, as if by magic.

Before very long we were able to raise the money we needed. One of us took on the responsibility to buy the things that we needed. At the same time we began to plan different kinds of activities which would raise money for the purchase of more books. We were able to get these books together quite successfully. And even though we didn't have any money, we were able to bring a new kind of life into the town.

But our fathers and mothers didn't sit by silently. They made scenes, they were extremely worried, they threw obstacles in our path, they did whatever they could to try to frustrate what we were trying to do and see that the library didn't become legal. They exposed the library to the danger of having the books

confiscated. But none of their shenanigans, in any way, slowed down the ever increasing numbers of new readers who would come in.

But with this accomplishment alone, the youth of Demblin wasn't satisfied. We decided to establish a cultural union. Before very long we rented a site. In just a few days it seemed, we were able to furnish it - a couple of long benches, a table, a couple of pictures which brightened up the bare walls. It took planning by many different people and different forms of activity to prepare all of this. We started a drama circle, a choir, we brought in different speakers. We even put out a newspaper. At the same time as this cultural activity was going on, the political activity of the group intensified. There were daily discussions and arguments, if you want to say it correctly, which paralyzed the normal activity and in the end created a schism.

Two groups were formed from the political parties which were operating among Jews. In this way, the town, all of a sudden, started to move. Afterwards, the winds of a new epic began to blow. The revolution in Russia, the defeat of Germany, the independence of Poland, the Balfour declaration - all of these events considerably raised hope in our young hearts. Later, of course, the various disappointments didn't take long to happen.

The liberation of Poland, which had called up such jubilation among us, because we had hoped that this event would be a blessing for the whole population, was quickly transformed into a curse for the people of Poland in general and for Jews especially. The Jewish life in little towns became very rough. Every local thug could get away with murder at the expense of Jews. General Haler's famous and terrible "Beard Heroes", these guys really went at it, they whacked away at helpless, unprotected Jewish faces. Life became unbearable and hopeless. The youth began to leave town and I was among them.

In 1918, I left Demblin and never went back. I'll never forget though, the bright as well as the dark days which I lived through there. When I think of the horribly brutalized town, its people I knew, rise before my eyes, as if they were alive.

As if alive, the dynasty of the Modzjitzer Rabbi presents itself before me. His melodies sound in my ears. As if alive I see the handsome, dignified Jews, our grandfathers, fathers and uncles, our warm hearted aunts, mothers and grandmothers, our brothers and sisters, and the children, oh, the children; our poor craftsmen, who always took one day out of their work week to make Sabbath; our wagon drivers and porters and carriage drivers and water carriers, nothing remains. Just a few little rings thrown out from the whole chain of Demblin.

Demblin, my eternal sorrow. *Yitgadol veyitkadash!* [prayer for the dead]

A TOWN LIKE ALL TOWNS

BY MECKLA KAPLANSKY-BUCKSPAN / SAN PAULO, BRAZIL

Demblin did not differ from all the Jewish towns in Poland. Our Jews were 95% of the population. There was a market place in the middle of the town with a big pump from which women carried water. In the market there was a magistrate, the jail, and the firehouse. The Justice of the Peace was a Jew - Yosel-Yidel, my Uncle.

The town made its living primarily from the fortress and the airfield as well as from the market which happened once a week on Wednesday. During the whole week, the shopkeepers and the merchants looked forward to market day. That was a joyous occasion. People from surrounding towns and villages poured in with cloth, fabrics, shoes, garments that were already made, bedding, and other kinds of goods. Peasants came from the surrounding countryside. They brought a lot of stuff with them. They bought goods there. It happened fairly frequently that a speaker would jump up on a wagon and hold forth to the peasants about politics.

For the better Jewish youth in town, there was an Educational Association, and for the simple workers, the Workers' Union. From time to time, speakers would come from different political parties and they'd give lectures, they'd have discussions and arguments, get all overheated about things, which is the way things are done in a little town. From Warsaw, the Jewish theater would often come and they'd play at the firehouse. There was a home grown drama circle which was led by Rafael Baigelman.

The youth at that time was left leaning. Before the first of May, they would regularly arrest several members of the Workers' Union.

There weren't any big factories in Demblin, nor were there any Jewish factory workers, really none.

I remember that hour when from the airfield and fortress, the officers with their polished and elegant wives used to come to the Modzjitzer Rabbi's house, in order to listen to the Rabbi, his sons and the Hasidim sing at the afternoon meal on the Sabbath. It was joyous in the market place, Jews and gentiles used to have a great deal of fun there.

[See PHOTO-A4 at the end of Section A]

Sunday, the town was full of soldiers and flyers. Jewish girls walked with the soldiers and their mothers would ring their hands in shame.

Demblin also had its wild youth. Jews were more afraid of them than they were of the authorities.

The town also had its crazy people: Karlkole of Keler, Motel the crazy one, who had a weakness for steeling fish which housewives used to set on their window sills to cool on Fridays.

I remember the first electric lights which lit up our rundown wooden houses. It was bright and joyful in our hearts when that happened.

Demblin had the reputation of being a big town. I remember one such episode, a contractor came to Demblin for the first time. A carriage driver led him from the station and into town. When he finally arrived and was standing in the middle of the market place, he yelled to the driver, "So! Take me to Demblin!"

In Demblin, people were not called by their names, because everybody had a nickname. For example, Itchek Shtrik, who's the child of Malye Shmelkeles, the Purim-Socher, Kreindel Hodeses, Moshe Milkes and Mekla, Moshe Milkes' daughter, that's who I was, Mekla Kaplansky from the Buckspan home and I've lived now in Brazil for more than 40 years.

MY MEMORIES OF DEMBLIN

BY DR. KALMAN PARIS / PETACH-TIKVA

My first acquaintance with Demblin came about in 1924 when I was a veterinary doctor employed in fighting a contagion that had broken out among the cattle of the area. At that time I lived in Ryki. At that time Demblin was a quiet little town, there wasn't too much traffic and there wasn't that much business going on.

In October, 1927, I settled in Demblin, where I was employed in the local slaughter house as a veterinary doctor and also I directed a course in first aid for animals in the agricultural school. They gave me an apartment in the school which was located in the former estate which the Czarist power had taken away from the local Polish aristocrat and given to General Paskovitch for his subduing the Polish revolt of 1863. The town was named after his wife, Irena. Today, the official name Demblin applies to the town and it has a status of an autonomous town. Up until that time, it, along with the neighboring countryside, formed the little county of Irena, and it had a head county official.

The estate was located in a beautiful area with pine trees. The air was very healthy. Afterwards the local inhabitants of Demblin were not allowed to take advantage of and enjoy the place.

During the 10 year existence of the school, Meyer Opotovsky, from Opotov, taught each and every Jewish pupil. The Demblin resident, Shmuen Virzhebitysky, was the sponsor of a lot of fund raising activities for the school.

At a certain point the town of Demblin began to develop, thanks to the construction of the military air base, the officer's school and other institutions. The main source of livelihood in the town was the airfield where the 15th infantry regiment was stationed in the barracks of what had formally been the fortress called Ivangorod, which was built during the Czarist time. Other sources of livelihood for the inhabitants were the 28th artillery regiment of Zjyezjya and the train station with all its workshops. Every first of the month, after paying out the pensions, people paid their debts off and then started to buy on credit again. The growth of business led to the founding of a cooperative bank under the management of H. Yuzef, and then there was the trader's bank under the leadership of Mr. Kannaryenfogel and a business bank (later, run by the grandson of H. Abenshteins). The banks were very useful to tradesman and craftsman. They survived the financial crisis of 1929-1930.

Something that was very curious was that the justice of the peace was a Jew named David Rubenshtein, because at that time Demblin still didn't have the status as an autonomous town and therefore a lot of its affairs were run by a single

village magistrate, just like the way things were run in the countryside. After him, in 1935, a man named Leshko became the village magistrate and he was a former supporter of the fund for sick people.

A second curiosity was that there wasn't a church in town. The Christians belonged to the Parish of Bobrownik near the river Wieprz. Their cemetery was there. Only after 30 years did they build a church in town and the Parish of Demblin was founded.

In Bobrownik, where several Jewish families resided, there was a Jewish cemetery which was fenced off thanks to the energetic action of Dr. Kornelstein.

[See PHOTO-A5 at the end of Section A]

B

According to the last census before the Second World War there were 8,000 inhabitants in the town, half of them Jewish and half of them gentile. I remember that it was emphasized at that time the difficult living conditions that were there, in a very small area from the synagogue to the street which led to the old suburb of Peshechodnia, where there were 500 people living.

Jewish children studied at Polish schools but there they received special instruction in religious things, especially Jewish history from the teacher, Miss Shteinhome and from Mr. Yankev Ekheiser. Soon after the First World War, Mr. Yuzef and Mr. Kannaryenfogel founded Jewish schools and kept them going for a certain amount of time until they were turned over to the public school system. Jewish children also studied at private Polish schools and high schools and some of them had tutors.

Two or three kilometers from the town were two rivers, the Vistula and the Wieprz. Through the town itself ran a little stream, and we used to call it Irenka. Young and old enjoyed the two rivers during the summer. We used to swim there and relax and play around on the banks of the rivers. Later there were a couple of incidents when people drowned.

The waters of the Wieprz emptied into the Vistula near the fortress of Demblin. There was a port of ships which traveled to Warsaw. The area around these two rivers was very beautiful. There were trees with broad branches which provided a lot of shade. The air was always good. It was a good place to go and pass some time and just relax.

In the town, there was a Rabbi, Mr. Rabinovitch. His wife was a sister of the Modzitzer Rabbi, the creator of Hasidic melodies who had lived in Otvotzk. The

name Modzjitzer I found on an old map in the Polish town hall. It was a town on the right bank of the Vistula where the Czarist government decided to build the fortress of Ivangorod. There were also over 20 Jewish families living there as well as in the neighboring big town of Stenzjitze also on the right bank of the river.

The Vistula was an important water lane upon which to transport goods to Warsaw and to Gdansk [*Danzig*], especially in the time when there weren't any trains. The boats used to carry wood, and the Mayor of Demblin at the time, Yan Kaminsky from Bobrownik, was one of the entrepreneurs who owned these barges which Jewish businessmen used to rent to carry wood or wheat or grains to Gdansk.

Rabbi Rabinovitch died before the War. There was quite a bit of activity and back and forth about choosing the replacement and finally they decided not to choose anybody. But they chose somebody to be the head of the community who was a military tailor by the name of Nachem Luxemburg.

C

The relations between Jews and the Polish population were, in general, not too bad. In the second half of the 30's, the tendency grew stronger among the Poles to broaden their business and take trade out of Jewish hands. Polish tradesman arrived from Pozen. Also local Poles opened shops. In the meat trade what helped a lot to marginalize the Jewish part of the business was a law that forbid ritual slaughter which was passed in the Polish parliament at the suggestion of Mrs. Prystor. The debate about this particular law reinforced the general anti-Semitic mood in the country. The condition of Jews in Poland became ever more critical. There was great hardship. It was necessary to take up collections for the neediest. We had different kinds of fund raising activities in order to feed and clothe children. Very active in this kind of work was Mrs. Yuseph, the widow of the bank's director. The population of Demblin supported these fund raising drives very warmly.

In those stressed out conditions an event occurred in the town which might have brought on a pogrom. The Vanapol family worked and lived in Demblin and they were revered by both Jewish and non-Jewish people. Zalman Vanapol was a folk doctor and well known for his ability to help people. After him, his son, Yarmeyohu, became involved with the practice and he was a very capable folk doctor with a very large practice. At their house there was always a group of wagons with peasants waiting who had brought their sick from the country side. He also had quite a few patients from town and from the military circles. He didn't charge poor people for a visit and provided money for medicine from his own pocket. He founded the free clinic in town.

Once upon a time, a sick woman from Vienna, a gentile, came to him. She was employed by the Honigsboim family, who were Jewish. Yarmeyohu Vanapol remarked about this to Mr. Honigsboim, who fired the woman from her job. The woman's boyfriend decided to make trouble for Yarmeyohu and he sent a letter with threats. He gave one of his letters to the chief of police in Demblin, a man named Soroko who he had a good relationship with. In the letter that he wrote about Yarmeyohu he wrote, "Today there's going to be a meeting at the synagogue, and he, Yarmeyohu is going to bring bombs and weapons." Soroko gave this letter to the next level of police force, and they talked it over with the military espionage service and they sent out an officer to the man who had accused Yarmeyohu, and there they found a map which he outlined and explained about how to get to Yarmeyohu Vanapol's. The officer carried out a very thorough search of Vanapol's house and of Honigsboim's house. They arrested them as well as a Pole who was a mechanic. Then they took them all to Pulaw to the interrogation headquarters. They let the Pole go and took the Jews, both of them, to the *Zameck* in Lublin.

This incident caused a very powerful reaction and a very demoralizing one among the Jewish population, even though everybody was utterly convinced that it was just libel. The Poles talked about it quite a bit themselves and they said that the Jews were guilty and that they were traitors. The atmosphere became extremely tense. I myself went to discuss the subject with Joseph Ekheiser and Kannaryenfogel and we emphasized that we needed to make an appeal to the head bureaucrat in Lublin and ask him to complete this investigation as quickly as he could because the Jews who had been arrested were very respected people in their town. We got together petitions from both the Polish and the Jewish inhabitants and we turned as well to Dr. Zohatsky and to Mayor Vadetsky and we asked them to travel with us in a delegation to the procurer general. And as an active member of the Jewish community I traveled along myself.

The gathering of these petitions and letters and sending a delegation made an extremely deep impression on the population and the heat of the matter started to die down. Afterwards an investigating judge from Lublin came and on the second day both of the Jews were released. They brought a charge of malicious slander against the man who had accused them and he got a year in prison.

D

About the political life in Demblin I really don't have much to say. Only once did I go to a Zionist meeting with Dr. Shiper, who was a deputy in the Polish parliament. Somebody came in and tore the meeting apart. We heard that people were arrested for their communist activity.

[See PHOTO-A6 at the end of Section A]

In the town council there were these people: Yarmeyohu Vanapol, Kannaryenfogel and Alter Apelkeyer. In the last town council there were 30 men and of them 14 were Jews: Yoseph Ekheiser, David Rubenstein, Shulman Wolf, Shmuel-Nachem Luxenburg and others.

In Demblin two Jewish doctors practiced, Dr. Kornelstein and Dr. Blumenfeld. Before the outbreak of the war, they were both mobilized. Dr. Kornelstein was also a person who loved social work in the community. He came back from Kovel to Demblin after the massacre that the Germans carried out there. For awhile he was in the Demblin ghetto. His wife, a Yugoslavian, with their children, were outside of the ghetto. The Germans arrested him for espionage and tortured him and shot him. Dr. Blumenfeld died in an officer's camp in Russia.

Dr. Gelber worked at the clinic, and he was a Jew who had converted. He hid out in Warsaw and was killed there.

There were three dentists practicing: My wife, Mrs. Vanapol and Mrs. Nuskeyer.

In the Demblin high school a woman who was the wife of a Polish military pilot taught and she lived with her Jewish parents. What became of them I don't know.

Yoseph Ekheiser and Karl Kannaryenfogel ran offices where they used to do paper work for people. They had quite a bit of activity going on there, especially in an effort to ease the burden of taxes, which were especially harsh on the Jewish population. And when they could they also intervened with other bureaucratic agencies on people's behalf.

MEMORIES OF ONCE UPON A TIME

BY BENYAMIN SMIT / DETROIT

I remember well my grandmother and grandfather, Yisrael-Ahron and Raiza. I remember them even before the First World War. They had four children. My grandfather made his living for the household as a tailor. Afterwards, his 2 daughters succeeded in traveling to America, while both sons remained in Demblin. The younger of them, Beryl (who was known by everybody in town as Beryl Yisrael-Ahrons), was my father. Motherly tenderness I don't remember because I didn't have the honor of experiencing it. My parents divorced when I was only 2 1/2 years old. The reason for that parting, I never learned.

I remained with my sick grandmother, Baila-Raiza, and things there were very good for me. I was shown a lot of love and warmth. But that happiness didn't last very long. She died and a family conference decided that I would be given into the care of the other grandparents, on my mother's side. The difference in the way I was treated and in the conditions, were felt immediately. They were very, very poor people, and more than once, we felt hunger.

I wanted very, very much to study in heder with the children who came from families who had a little bit. But, what could I do? I didn't even have a pair of shoes on my feet. I went back to my father, but he wasn't able to help me either. I was alone with my sorrow.

Like a lot of the young people in the town, I left. I went to Warsaw, to my Uncle Avrom. I added myself to his 6 person family. We were all in one room together. At night, they set up another little iron bed by the door. And all four of us slept together in one bed.

It didn't take very long for me to make very good friends. Benek, Motes, Hershel and Monesh (and all of them together owned absolutely nothing). And also a girlfriend, who was later to become my life companion. We got married and I opened a hairdo salon on Mirzontzka street.

That year, fire broke out in the neighborhood and it took my shop in flames and smoke. The whole neighborhood burned down. I went into partnership with Hertzke Berkovitch and we rented a little store near Yosef Hochman - and all my clients came back to me.

After getting married I was mobilized in the Polish army and served for two years. With the outbreak of the War, the first of September, 1939, I left for the front to fight, but the experiences in the War years are a separate chapter for me. In 1945 I settled in America with my wife and four children.

MEMORIES AND IMAGES OF MY BIRTHPLACE

BY DAVID WAICHMAN / AMERICA

THE MARKET PLACE

Like the majority of Jewish towns in Poland, Demblin had a big market place, around which there were stores of all different kinds of merchants. There were bakeries and grain merchants. They sold herring and kerosene fuel, cucumbers, chocolate, needles and thread, eternal lights. Quite by contrast, there was also the sale of candles for church, soap and matches, lard and cologne. In short, everything that could be of use to people in their households. There was a tailor shop with all kinds of materials from thick peasant canvas, silken Hasidic overcoats and good gabardine for the officers in the fortress. There were different kinds of hats, boots, elegant shoes for women, thick work boots for 10 rubles a pair. There was no shortage as well of all kinds of sweetmeats to give as presents. In the market place there were also stalls for small vendors and crafts people who made things.

On market day, merchants came from the surrounding towns and set up their booths with all different kinds of goods. The whole family would be mobilized to take advantage of the market day. They'd all come and there were happy sounds. In the family, one bought and one sold, and somebody was always keeping an eye out to make sure nothing got lifted from the stalls. It was a very intense, bustling kind of scene. The organ grinder was playing and there was that sound of the organ mixed in with the singing of the blind man and the haggling over cheaper prices, the praising of the great products and the arguments and the curses from a dissatisfied customer. Feathers from fowl flew in the air, the pigs oinked and the horses whinnied and the sheep baaed.

[See PHOTO-A7 at the end of Section A]

There was no shortage of thieves who managed to steal things from the wagons and purses. They'd have card games and throw dice. Children were not able to sit still in heder with all of this going on and they would stumble about, underfoot and every once in a while, for their trouble, they would come up with an apple, a plum or a pear, which had fallen. Peasant girls and boys would gnaw on different kinds of candy, or a sugar hen. When they got to eat these kinds of things, they were extremely happy and you would see the remains of the candy smeared all over their faces. In a great mood of celebration a drunk peasant would dole out a few slaps to the hands.

DEMBLIN PIETY

At the edge of the market place there were two buildings from the two councils. The Polish one, a very fine one, with red-white brick, was very clean. And the Jewish one, a much more modest building because there sat very wise, Jewish minds, who took responsibility for and worried about the community, beginning with the Shames and Beadle, up to and including the Rabbi who was the son-in-law of the Modzjitzer Rabbi. After someone was born, this group took responsibility for the moyel so that the child could get circumcised. After death, they would take responsibility for the burial with the Burial Society. Everything that had relevance to Jewish people and to Jewishness emanated from the Jewish council. Of course, after a considerable amount of discussion and sometimes dispute. (You tell me, can one individual, for instance, a Rabbi, or a Cantor, or a kosher butcher, or a Shames, be missing from a whole community of Jews? Without these people, they are like a flock of sheep which doesn't have sufficient direction.)

The truth is, we did have a Rabbi who had many virtues. He was a great scholar. He came from a very impressive lineage. He had a very distinguished face and a very beautiful beard. He himself was very modest and unassuming. He was very well respected by everyone in town, and very well loved.

We also had a Shames, who was a very devoted person and very faithful. Every Friday at dusk, he would bang on Jews' shutters with a hammer, and tell them the Sabbath was coming near, and they needed to shut their stores up. He would rouse people from their warm beds to pray and urge them to go to synagogue and pray for a good year for the Jews. Could anybody really criticize him for doing that? I mean, because, really, if anybody really didn't want to go, they just didn't go. But it was different before the Sabbath, at that time everybody had to do what he said and show up.

The stores in the town were shut up. Women lit candles. The town smelled of gefilte fish. Jews in fur coats, long beards and payes, led children by their little hands and hurried either into the main synagogue or into the other little synagogues in the town. It was warm and bright and it was a mood of celebration which reigned during praying. The Cantor sang and the congregation with him. They gashockled and swayed with great religious fervor.

When the davening ended, one went home, feeling good, where mothers and daughters were already waiting, all dressed up, in honor of Sabbath. A great, good Sabbath filled the house and different angels came down to name a little piece of the world in the celebration of a Jew with his holy Sabbath.

Whether poor or rich, the mood of celebration was the same. In the case of the Sabbath meal, however, there were big differences. There were, sad to say, poor

crafts people, who would spend their last groschen for the Sabbath, for a little bit of challah, a little bit of fish, if only the head, but they would sing with real feeling. And there was always a little cup of spirits, and that's all it took really.

JEWISH FAMILIES AND TYPES

A little bit on a hill, at the other side of the market, a family lived by the name of Smiyetaneh. Each dawn, early in the morning before light, they got up and hitched up the horse to a little wagon and "yo!" they were on the way. Perhaps, even as a child, he had dreamed of holding the reins in one hand, and driving the horse at a gallop across the town. But, earning a living for him was really hard. In rain and wind and snow and bitter cold, he traveled on the roads and little byways. He and his horse together carried the burden of making a living, really, a horse of life. More than once, he would let out his anger on his horse and then be unable to sleep all night, and then in the morning would make up with him. He didn't give him oats, but as a compensation, he would sing to him. He would sing either "*Vismechu*" or "*Cabekretel*", or he would make him understand his complaints to the Creator.

If that was the life of the teamster, then the life of the tin maker, of the blacksmith, the tailor, the shoemaker, the carpenter, and the glass maker, were all very similar. They worked very hard, they tried to build up their lives, but God had to help them with making a living. And yet, they got by. They didn't have any big complaints. They were able to deal with the hardships of life, and they lived with faith. Did they have a choice?

Later, a different sun began to shine in Demblin. The Jewish community began to speak about ideas, about parties, about Socialism, about Zionism, and other "isms".

There was a custom that we had -- a little man with a hunchback. We regarded him as a sage of a kind, a person who had real intelligence. He was always trying to figure out how to improve the world and make things better for people. He was concerned with individuals and how to make everybody's life around there better. Around him congregated the *Nisht-bozitzende* [the have-nots], as well as the people who were dissatisfied and who waited for a very simple kind of redemption, which was that everybody would be made equal. The rich should share with the poor. The powerful should renounce their domination. But, if they did not want to do that willingly, what then? Well, the majority were the weak ones, the poor ones, and they'd have to decide that if by moral persuasion, they weren't able to make these changes, they'd have to carry them out by force, which means, a revolution. What was meant by that revolution, and exactly how to carry it out, he really had studied with his cohorts. Through strikes and meetings and demonstrations, in short, he was the "Rabbi" and the organizer of

the left wing in the town. Putting aside for the moment his revolutionary work, he had to hide out when the Soviets arrived. Afterwards, he went to Lodz where he died of a heart attack.

There was a woman who lived among us, a poor, simple, fish wife. She was very pretty with a very tender face and blue eyes. She didn't make very much of a living and add to that the fact that she had to take care of a house with daughters who didn't have a father around. But none of this stood in the way and she dedicated herself to other needy people. She especially would work on behalf of poor young women who wanted to get married and needed to have some dowry money. She would gather money for women like this, brides to be, and she wasn't particular about who she did it for. She was very dedicated. She was very, very well thought of and people had great faith in her. As a result of that, people would give very generously when she asked, they knew she was the real thing, and she was honest and reliable. Nobody even thought to be suspicious of her. And besides gathering money, she would give advice to rich and poor alike. One always left her feeling better and followed her advice because she was very wise.

[See PHOTO-A8 at the end of Section A]

I will describe our folk doctor briefly. He had taken over his profession from his father. He was an expert on all different kinds of diseases. When one came to Yarmeyohu for treatment as a sick person, one left as a healthy person. From a medical standpoint it seemed that his cures were often incomprehensible. But anyone who remembers him understands, that was just the way he was. He was able to work very effectively. First of all, he listened to a sick person, not with a stethoscope exclusively, but with his heart. He took an interest in all the hardships of daily life which people came to him had to endure. He took an interest in their sorrows, their experiences, their worries. As the patient would unburden themselves and get it all out to Yarme, the person felt better. He knew that people listened to him seriously because when he would listen to them he would have a sincere desire to help them and to understand them. With his skill in remedies and ways to help people, he surpassed regular doctors. He had a practice that had been in place many years. And not just Jews, but also the Christians from town and the surrounding areas came to him and had tremendous trust and belief in him, more than they did in the regular doctors of Demblin. He was also very active in social affairs and in different kinds of philanthropic organizations.

Before the beginning of the War, he was arrested and sent to Kartuz-Berezhah under suspicion of espionage. How such a libelous charge came to be brought against him is not known. It was also not known his fate after that and where he was killed.

Leibel Bubis with his wife, made a poor living. They lived in a run down little house. Yankel had a thin face, wise eyes, and spoke with great wit. We regarded him as a very spiritual person.

After the October revolution [*the revolution in Russia in 1917*], Yankel Bubis came to Demblin. He organized a circle, and there he gave forth new ideas. His talks were always very interesting, deep and thought provoking. His dear life companion, Dena, distinguished herself with her intelligence, humor and her singing.

One said of the Baigelman family: wise heads and golden hands. The father, Laibish, loved to chat with people and to talk politics in a very polemical way. A handsome Jew, tall and slim, he founded a benevolent association/loan office for poor people, in order to help the needy families in town. His sons and daughters fought a fight for justice and interested themselves in cultural and literary problems.

Later, they as well, shared the tragic fate of the majority of Demblin Jews. Honored be their memory.

[See PHOTO-A9 at the end of Section A]

A BIG, JEWISH FAMILY

BY YITZHAK-AHRON YOM-TOV / JERUSALEM

The town with the names Ivangorod, Irena, Modzjitz, Demblin, was close to each of our hearts. That's where our dear ones, our close relatives lived. That's where we were brought up and educated together. Like one Jewish family, we lived in a comradely way, with love and respect for each other.

The first step in life and studying was made when we went to heder. We were under the influence of the teacher in the heder and we waited for and believed in the angel who would throw down a little piece of sugar for a good, Jewish child. Until today, memories stay with us from those childhood years, despite the poverty and the squalor of the cramped quarters of the heder. The sour smells from the pickles and the cabbage, which overflowed the barrels which were at the house of my first Rabbi who I studied with. The odor of fresh grass at the heder of Avrom-ben-Tzion, which on Friday was transformed into little bundles of hay for the Jewish horses in the town.

At Leibel Putermachers, we had already learned "In the beginning there was light". We learned this accompanied by a big whip. By Rabbi Sonny Melamed, we began to learn, "*Shnayim Ochzin Betalit*". There we were instructed in a little bit of Hasidism including the melodies from the Modzjitzer Rabbi.

Friday, when Reb Ahron the Shames banged on the doors and called people to synagogue, we pushed and drove ourselves to end the weekday. Jews hurried through Warshavsky street and hurried to shut their stores, before the Sabbath candles were lit. We used to help pull in the vegetables and the crates for the women who would stand outside and peddle them.

Holy Sabbath in the town. People would sing the melodies of the Modzjitzer Rabbi, but Reb Shmuel the Cantor, would sing his high melody to *Lecha Dodi*. Our Jewish horses, with their ears perked up, would wait at the well for their masters to get out of synagogue.

After this part of the Sabbath, the whole town would go out for a walk in the street. Different groups would walk together and discuss and debate about things, taking the right wing point of view, or left wing point of view, or Zionist point of view.

There was quite a bit of organized social activity in the town. There were various organizations and charitable/benevolent associations to make sure that for instance, people who didn't have any place to stay, would be taken in. There was a clinic, and a fund for the poor people. There was a lot of politicking and a lot of

debating. Before the elections, the community would spread nasty rumors about each other, but after the elections, everybody in the Jewish community made peace.

[See PHOTO-A10 at the end of Section A]

Moshe Faiga helped take care of the dead, so that he would be taken into the Burial Society. He wasn't a tailor. Still, they took him in. At the feast of the Burial Society, he would ask that the other people around him would give two rolls and then he would lay a fork on his knees and he would lift up the table. Of the procession of people in the Burial Society, he remained the only one who went to Israel.

Friday in the afternoon before it got dark, one waited in the synagogue for lists of how many of the numbers of people within the Jewish community paid their taxes. The numbers of the needy people were very great. The things that were required that the Jewish community needed to provide for itself were considerable. For example, every year they had to repair the big, iron stove in the synagogue. They had to provide for Mendel, the sexton of the synagogue. They had to prepare Passover for the Jewish soldiers from the 15th and 28th divisions. They needed money for a lot of things, and more money, and there weren't too many people who could provide it.

ABOUT MY FAMILY AND TOWN

BY YITZHAK APELGOT / PARIS

A

My father, Yisrael Apelgot, was the son of David-Ber Apelgot, a great, Talmudic scholar, a very wise Jew. People came to him for advice, to get an interpretation of a particularly difficult passage in the Gemorah. He was the bookkeeper for the very big wood merchant by the name of Kalman Zucker. He had a big family, 21 children. David-Ber died in 1909 or 1910. There was a very, very big funeral for him, a special service in the synagogue.

His son, Yisrael, had a family of 6 sons and 3 daughters. He worked with metal and lamps. He manufactured soap. He had a laundry. Added to that he was a very observant Jew and a Talmudic scholar himself. Just like his father, people came to him with questions about the Torah. A big question came to him in 1913, more than even a question, more like a major dispute. The two people who were disputing were contractors who supplied the fortress with meat for the Russian military.

Yankel Apelgot had a family of 6 children. He was the head of the yeshiva in Demblin.

In the First World War, in 1915, the Russians shot a Jew behind the town. It was a Friday, in the afternoon. They sent word to the Jews that they should come and bury this person. Everybody in the Burial Society was too scared to go out and get the dead person. Yankel Apelgot got a wagon and went out and brought back the Jew who had been shot. The whole town waited for him, hoping that he'd come back alive. For this accomplishment he was inscribed in a special book by the Burial Society "Sefer HaZehav".

The Germans, during the Second World War, gave Yankel special freedoms to travel outside the town on a train. He got this special permission because of his trade. In this way he was able to do a number of things that benefited the whole town. During deportation, they took him along with all of the Jews, and they said to him that he should show his special permission that he had, and that if he did, they would let him go. He answered that he did not want to be an exception. What happened to the rest of the Jews would happen to him.

B

I was born in Demblin in 1900. I'd studied in heder and yeshiva until I was 17 years old. I studied writing and arithmetic with a private teacher because there wasn't any school at that time available in Demblin.

There were 9 kids in our family. The whole family, children and grandchildren, numbered 35. Only 4 people survived. The rest were killed in Auschwitz.

My mother's parents came from Bobrowniki, where the Jewish graveyard was located.

The first Jewish school was established in 1909 by Mordechai Sheinberg. The teachers were Shlome Sheinberg and his sister, Faigela. The Hasidim were against the school and agitated about it and tried to get people not to send their children there. But the school developed very well because there wasn't any other school in Demblin. This was a very important achievement and a notable measure of the developments in the town for the Jewish youth. It meant a lot to them.

C

I remember the storm that grew up in the town when the school presented the first Chanukah evening. Shlome Sheinberg gave a talk. The poem, "Oh, you little candles", was recited by Henye Tenenboim.

I was 11 years old at the time. My father said that doing this kind of thing insulted the Chanukah candles.

The second accomplishment was the establishment of a drama circle at the cultural union. The circle had great success in Demblin, as well as in the surrounding little towns. The drama circle was established in 1919 thanks to the initiative of our most important folk doctor Yarmeyohu Vanapol. He played a very great role and gave a lot of time to the circle and he got permission whenever it was necessary and rented the performance hall in town.

The first performance was "The Massacre", by Yaacov Gordon. Among the men who played parts were: Yarmeyohu Vanapol, Yitzhak Apelgot, David Kolowinsky, Aba Bantman and Leibel Krovet. Among the women were: Henye Tenenboim, Malye Baitzman, Chana Goldberg, and Chana-Gitel Wasserman. The set designer was: Krosny Valye.

In 1922 the drama group gave a performance in Gniveshov, 12 kilometers from Demblin. The whole town came to see our performance. That was a big event for them.

When Ali Durklevitch was arrested for revolutionary activity and needed money for a lawyer to defend him, the drama group gave a performance. Their success was great, and they were able to raise the required sum that he needed.

In Demblin, the word went around among the pious Jews, that when the community needed money, lets have a little theater performance.

[See PHOTO-A11 at the end of Section A]

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

BY YISRAEL ROZENWEIN / RAMAT-GAN

Among the hundreds of Jewish communities in Poland that were destroyed by the Nazis there was also our community of Demblin-Modzjitz. This community was situated between the banks of two large rivers in Poland, the Vistula and the Wieprz, and these rivers surrounded the community. There was a time when those two big rivers partially overflowed, and part of the community was flooded and became part of a large river that flowed directly to the Baltic by the port city of Danzig.

I do not know historically if in Demblin-Modzjitz it was forbidden for Jews to settle during the Kings of Poland or during the Czar of the Romanov house. The first settlement of Jews in Demblin started in a small village by the name of Bobrownik, not far from Demblin. After, the Jews of Demblin started to settle in a small suburb of the city and in Demblin itself. Then throughout the existence of the Jewish community in Demblin-Modzjitz, the cemetery of the Jews of Demblin was in the little village of Bobrownik. The rule was that since Demblin was situated strategically, a cemetery and/or synagogue or any such Jewish activity was forbidden in such locations. At the same time churches and cemeteries of Christians were not situated there as well.

During all the wars and conquests that took place in Poland from the War with Napoleon to the First World War, the Jews of Demblin were persecuted and evicted. They wandered with their families and belongings through all the roads to find shelter. All the properties that they left behind were either burned or stolen or taken by others.

When the storms ended, the Jews of Demblin-Modzjitz would return to their communities and start to rebuild again and again. They liked their little town that was surrounded by rivers, lakes, forests, gardens and agricultural land.

The main income of the Jews in that town came from services to the military and the fortress by the name of Ivan the terrible, and also from the intersection of the railroad that passed through the city and connected all parts of Poland. The different occupations of the Jews were tailors who produced the clothing for the Czar court in Petersburg (today Leningrad), shoemakers that made the boots for the officers that camped in the fortress, metal and smith workers, carriage owners that brought visitors from the train to the hostels or hotels in the city, and also some who were merchandise suppliers for the military, such as wood, food, etc.

On every Wednesday of the week there was a big market. Farmers from the adjacent villages brought their agricultural merchandise for sale, among which

were animals such as horses, chickens and cows. In addition there were also merchandise booths of Jews from Demblin and its environs, with their local manufacturing such as clothing, shoes, boots, leather, different kinds of fabrics, etc. It was a vigorous day of buying and selling.

When Poland was divided during the first World War by the Germans and the Austrians, Demblin was situated on the border and soon enough became a center for smuggling a variety of merchandise. A good, thorough description of the smugglers and the smuggled items is located in the book of the Jewish writer Ozer Warshavsky in his book "The Smugglers".

When Poland became independent and was ruled by Jozef Pilsudski, the gangs of Petlura and Denikin helped the Polish army in its struggle against the Bolsheviks. Soldiers from the gang of General Heler from Pozen murdered many Jews from Demblin-Modzjitz. They raped and drowned the daughters and the women in the water of the Vistula.

The Jews of Demblin-Modzjitz were very religious but very simple. There were not many among them who were public people or famous intellectuals. However, the Jewish community of Demblin-Modzjitz was known by the musical tunes of the Rabbi from Modzjitz, Reb Yisrael Taub. Throughout all the synagogues and the Jewish communities of Poland and outside Poland, many were humming and singing his tunes.

There were also a few rich people among the Jews in that community. Among them was the famous Rabbi Kalman Zucker who was a renowned supporter of the Rabbi from Modzjitz. Kalman Zucker donated money and support to the Rabbi's family, and when his son married the Rabbi's daughter for a wife, he prepared a very expensive and impressive wedding ceremony. The wedding ceremony lasted seven days and there were many performers, dancers and magicians, and good food and music were all over.

Demblin-Modzjitz also had many "*Hadavim*", places to study Torah and values. It was a place where the young kids would go study the bible, values and their heritage. There also was a female Rabbi in Demblin, her name was Rivka the Rabbi, who taught the girls of the community the *Kiriat Shma*, *Modeh Ani* and the alphabet.

In the yeshiva of the Hasids Gur and Alexander, young students studied the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud, the Rambam and all other interpretations. There were also a few who studied to become Rabbis. In addition there were a few secular schools in the city where the youngsters studied free professions.

Who does not remember Reb Zalman Feltcher, the medic? He used to stand in front of his house with three shiny cups in his hands. He was also available to help and cure people with these cups or shiny instruments. He also had many different kinds of medicines and ointments for wounds and pains. He was a very good Jew who liked to help others. He gave his sons the best education and they studied engineering and medicine and as far as I remember they never abandoned the heritage of the Jewish people.

We also must mention Rabbi Berla, the Shames. On the evening of Sabbath, Friday night, he used to circulate amongst the entries to the houses and declare the beginning of the Shabbat. During the days of the Slichot, at dawn, he used to circulate and wake up with his wonderful voice the Jews of Modzjitz to come and celebrate and pray for the Slichot. When somebody in the community passed away, Rabbi Berla immediately circulated a box, singing and raising money for charity for the family of the deceased.

[See PHOTO-A12 at the end of Section A]

The Jews of Modzjitz were good hosts. They used to host the Jewish soldiers that were camped in the fortress so that they didn't feel lonely away from home. They would host them on Shabbat and holidays and even during the rest of the year.

I can't complete the description of Demblin without mentioning the thugs of the city that used to fight amongst themselves until the small hours of the night for a variety of criminal activities. These thugs used to threaten the non-Jewish community since they refused to threaten the Jews during market days. When those thugs had an extensive fight nobody could separate them but the military from the fortress, where in many cases such a fight ended up in murder.

There were also many Jews in the community who were supporters of the land of Israel. As they heard about the Balfour Declaration, the Jews of Demblin arranged marches where the marcher in front was Rabbi Gershon with the other important people of the city. They would march to the train station and there the Rabbi would give a speech about the special event that was taking place in those days since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Also, revolutionary movements were not missing in Demblin. Among the many movements in Demblin-Modzjitz, we should mention the Halutz movement, other worker-union organizations, and of course the Zionist and non-Zionist movements.

Among the first to immigrate to Israel from the community were Rabbi Avraham Shmeltzstein, David Rozenfeld and his family, Mister Konotofsky, who by the way was also the personal tailor of the Czar Nikolai. And also me, a young man in those days, who joined the pioneer brigade that was led by the famous Yosef

Trumpeldor and I started a settlement at Kfar Giladi-Tel Chai. After these first immigration moves to Israel, many of the young boys and girls of Demblin followed and took active parts in the immigration and pioneering and the building of the country (Israel).

Later when Poland was conquered by the Nazis, a new concentration camp was established in Demblin and most of the Jewish community was sent to the death camps. Only a few ended up working in the concentration camps and in the city. Very few managed to be lucky enough to escape to Russia. And only those of the city inhabitants who earlier immigrated to Israel established their new life and served their lives.

We will never forget what the Nazis did to our community and the memory of their action will never leave us.

ABOUT THE DEMBLIN WAY OF LIFE

Excerpted from a Newspaper "The Observer". Published in Demblin on December 27, 1933, in honor of the journey to Palestine of Benyamin Zilberman. Edited by Zalman Orlovsky, Yosef Gelibter and Yoneh Borstein.)

TRANSACTION (BY A DEMBLIN CLOTHING MERCHANT)

It's 9 o'clock in the morning. I open up my store and there's a customer. "Good Morning, we need a donation." In about 10 minutes I open the door. "We need a donation. We're 2 people here and we need something." Very soon thereafter, 2 ragged looking Jewish women come in and say, "For a really hungry Jewish family, you have to help us out." Not 5 minutes go by, I open the door quickly and 2 Jews out of breath come in, "We need a donation for a ticket for a German Jewish refugee, but you've got to do it fast, because the train is pulling out right now." That's the way it goes all day. A list of good causes: patient visits, hospital fund, house for putting up strangers, book repair, synagogue, meals on the Sabbath....Reb Meir comes in with a delegation and he's got to raise money for the bath house.

Now it's 5 o'clock in the afternoon and I've just managed to take 10 minutes to have a little something to eat. When I come back the tax collector is waiting there.

"Good evening, let me see your tax form. It seems like it's time already. You know what I'm talking about."

"Believe me", I answer, "I would take you home, but the tall guy in the fur coat, the tax collector, was just here and cleaned me out just 5 minutes ago. I had to borrow a few dollars to be able to pay him off."

The guy did not close the door. On the contrary, "Good evening, please make a down payment for this tax, my dear lady, of a penny. The tall guy sat himself down at this point and wrote for 10 minutes and left me a bill with the remark "get busy" and left.

Undoubtedly I would have been able to have 10 more customers, all of them asking for some kind of charity and 5 different tax collectors. But, hearing the whistle of the police, I had to close the doors quickly because I was afraid of getting a summons.

GRABBED BY THE HAND

A Demblin boy read a Hebrew book.

A Demblin girl made a date with a Demblin boy.

This little flower drew the first pension from the community. This person Brownshpigel.

The Demblin ritual butcher was caught slaughtering animals in the slaughter house.

The Demblin Rabbi Shlit was caught making a judgment on Jewish law which people had brought to him, and his wife didn't collect the fee for it.

PRIZES

A prize of 500 zlotys to anybody who can find the secretary of the Jewish community in his office at any time from 9 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon. And see the President about this.

A prize of a 100 zlotys to the speaker from the Zionist group who doesn't curse Zionism.

A prize of 200 zlotys to the pioneer who spends 3 months on a Kibbutz and doesn't take 6 leaves of absence.

A prize of a 100 zlotys for the delivery person of the newspaper if once in a whole week they bring the newspaper.

A worthless ship's ticket for the pioneer who will say that he has traveling expenses to go to Israel on his own.

A prize of 50 zlotys for the person who can go to the Rabbi's office during the day and not find him asleep.

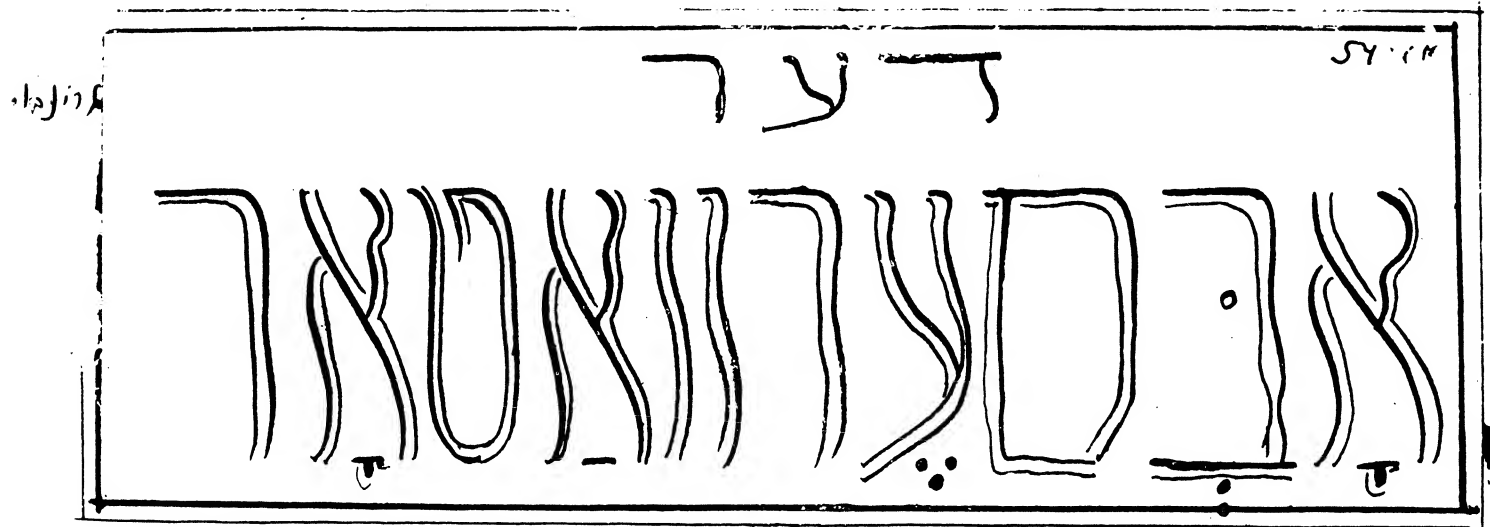
A prize of 500 zlotys for the person who can get Yankel Feigenboim a job.

IMPORTANT NEWS

The person Elenblum, in his speech about the budget of the Jewish Council greatly praised the activity of the president Sh. N. Luxemburg.

היינו בארץ ישראל ונחיה
 בטהרה ונאמץ את הארץ הזאת
 ונבנה אותה

פאזען



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עטון חי, "ידישער אבסערוואַטאר" — "המשקיף" שהופיע לרגל עלייתו ארצה של הח' בנימין זילברמן — 27.12.33
 די לעבעדיקע צייטונג, דערשיינען דעם 27.12.33 לכבוד דעם עולה זיין קיין א"י פון ח' בנימין זילבערמאן

A living newspaper, "The Observer", published in Demblin on December 27, 1933, in honor of the journey to Palestine of Benyamin Zilberman.

TRANSLATION OF NEWSPAPER PAGE (Page 100 in Yiddish-Hebrew Book)
 "The Observer" -- The latest telegraph news -- Jerusalem. Zabotinsky [head of right-wing Zionist group] sends a greeting from Jerusalem to the executive member Y. Greenbaum. Important News: The person Elenblum, in his speech about the budget of the Jewish Council greatly praised the activity of the President Sh. N. Luxemburg.

The Zionist, L. L. was seen at a Zionist lecture.

The Pioneers Shlome Rubenstein and Ali Feigenboim, this week looked for a Zionist organization.

The Rabbi's wife this Friday wasn't able to get 2 zlotys from Shemeryle.

A Pioneer this week traveled to Palestine and had traveling expenses.

The Pioneer got a little bit drunk and began to scream out "I will be Greenboim".

The Demblin Jewish Council began to circulate its announcements in Hebrew as well.

The Demblin Rabbi Shlit gave a talk and didn't refer to the psalms once.

When a pioneer turned to the Jewish Council for a subsidy of 1200 zlotys, the council came back and gave him 2400 zlotys.

ADVERTISEMENTS

A good, well run business to provide meals for the afternoon meal and havdala at the eastern wall of our synagogue. Attention, this business is free of taxes and go see about it to the pennant.

All ready to be taken over, a very well run business with an apartment and bathroom and an excellent clientele, see about it through Mendel F.

We are looking for a Shames to wake the Rabbi up. See about this through the Jewish Council.

THE JEWS OF DEMBLIN UNTIL THE HOLOCAUST

BY FIDELIS STAMPHIAN / DEMBLIN-ZAYEJEJE

The author of this work is a Pole who lives in a suburb of Demblin, Zayejeje. When the editors of our book turned to the city officials in Demblin about supplying certain materials for the book an answer came that Stamphian was especially designated to take over this matter. Mr. Stamphian did not disappoint us. He sent us for the book a great deal of historical material about the city and about Jewish life there. But the most important thing that this gentile did was to send us tens of pictures of Jewish families in Demblin before the War as well as photographs of societal significance of that epic.

The book committee and editor are not in agreement with all the facts, conclusions and valuations that Mr. Stamphian makes concerning Jewish life, especially in the years between 1914 and 1939, but they have not changed the text, leaving the final conclusions to the readers and the future historians.

About the destruction of Demblin's Jewry, we have published Stamphian's work in Hebrew in a section called "Holocaust and Struggle".

THE HISTORY OF DEMBLIN

The name Demblin comes from the great number of oak trees [*Dem* means oak] which grow in the whole area near where the Wieprz flows into the Vistula.

The growth of Demblin is described in a work by Yan Chayadlo - called "Generations Speak", in the first issue, 1959. He backs up with various documents from the descriptions in the "12th Volume" written by the priest, Yevim Fredreich Bistjitzky, who was in an office of the Parish of Stenjitza. He lived at the end of the 18th century.

The King Vladislav Lokyetek gave Demblin as an eternal gift, to the Knight of Yeshkovitch for his service to the King. In that time Demblin was a little courtyard with a few little houses of the peasants who were in service to the Knight. The Knight built a very luxurious court to replace the old court yard, enlarging the farm and imprisoning prisoners of war.

In the 15th century, the area of Demblin was in the possession of the Tarnovsky's. They built Demblin up and in the neighboring Bobrownik they established a church.

In the 16th century Demblin was turned over to the Menishek family and remained in their possession until the year 1806.

In 1726, the Demblin area became the property of Count Yozef Vandalis Menishek, Poland's crown Marshall and the possessor of a *magnatishen hoif* [couldn't translate].

Demblin can thank Count Menishek for its blossoming which happened during the second half of the 18th century in the epic of the Renaissance. Demblin was built up and a very elegant and impressive court was established.

This elegant residence in Demblin was built by the famous architect of Kaiser August II of Saxony, Antony Fontan, and thereafter by his son Yacov.

Further work to make this elegant residence more beautiful was carried out by Yan Karol Menishek and his son Michael Yejy, who had taken on the position of the major secretary for the crown and from the year 1781 he was the president of the commission for national education. Michael Yejy Menishek, in 1780, brought to Demblin the chief architect of King Stanislaw August Poniatovsky -- Dominic Merliniyeg. This was with the help of the King himself, who wanted for his niece Ursula, of the Zamoyisky family, the wife of the last of the Menishek's, to build a palace similar to the Lajenkis palace in Warsaw.

The Demblin palace was covered on the outside with carvings, the floors were raised and the hall was made much wider and bigger, the outer appearance of the palace was made more beautiful with a very elegant gate and two towers, one of which stands until today as well as a beautiful park which was laid out by the famous architect and planner Shuch. On the little island in the pond a very impressive mausoleum was built, following the example of the one at the Lajenkis palace in Warsaw. Demblin became a center for modernism and culture.

The Count Menishek, one of the first in Poland, in the month of May, 1783, installed a lightening rod at his residence which was at that time called a conductor and this was after the example of the American scholar and politician Benjamin Franklin. The supervision of the installation of the lightening rod was given to the priest, Y. F. Bistjitzky, who was the court astronomer of Stanislaw August Poniatovsky. He immortalized all of this in his descriptions the "12th Volume".

The last owner of Demblin from the Menishek family, Yejy-Michael, was allied with the traitor to the people, the so called "*Targovitze*". He belonged to the circle

around the Czarina, Yekaterina II, and he conducted a secret espionage for the Czarist regime. He died in 1806 with the shameful reputation of being a traitor to his own land and people.

The daughter of Yejy-Michael, Paulina-Konstantzye married Antony Yablonsky and for her dowry presented him with Demblin.

The prince Antony Yablonsky, for his part in the Dekabrist conspiracy, was arrested and sent to Saratov Gubernia in Russia. The princess Paulina-Konstantzye followed her husband into exile.

For the next 10 years the Demblin palace was empty. In the early days of the owners of Princess Yablonsky, a short sort of rebirth occurred but the palace never returned to its former glory.

In 1836, the princess Yablonsky sold her possession and Demblin came under authority of the Russian regime.

In 1830, the November rebellion broke out which was crushed in a bloody manner in 1831. The person who had responsibility for the crushing of this uprising was General Ivan Paskevitch, who was appointed the Czar's representative in the Polish Kingdom and received the title of the Prince of Warsaw. In 1842, Czar Nikolai I presented Paskevitch with Demblin which constituted the farms: Demblin, Podviyejviya, Vimislov, Borove, Matige and Borovine. The territory of which this constituted was made up of 12,000 acres and the largest part of the territory was forest.

At the moment that the Prince Paskevitch took over Demblin, its long decline began, until the change of the name Demblin to Ivanover.

The composition of the area took in the following settlements: Miyejviyontska, Ritshietz, Klestshuvke, Mostshanka, New-Demblin, Lason, Sendovitch, Niyebjegov, Niyetshietz, Golomb, Boruv, Balton, Vulka Golemska and the settlement of Borovnik and Irena.

In the era of Prince Paskevitch the growth of Irena was established in 1854. The name comes from Paskevitch's wife Irena. The same applies to the little river that flows there and carries the name of Irena as well.

In 1842, according to an order of the Czar, the creation of the town of Modzjitz began at the confluence of the Wieprz and the Vistula and a fortress was built which was designed to create a sense of fear and awe in the whole district and thus discourage any kind of rebellion or mutiny.

The newly created fortress, at the Czar's order, was named Ivangorod (this time it was named for Field Marshal Ivan Paskevitch), the same name was given to the train station and the train line over the Vistula bridge.

While building the fortress, a lot of crafts people as well as unskilled laborers were employed who had settled in Demblin. At the same time as the workers arrived, Jews came, and they opened supply stores. After that came artisans. Thus, one can establish the beginnings of the Jewish presence when the construction of the fortress began, and not the changing of Demblin into Irena.

In the year 1881, Irena had 2,309 inhabitants in 96 wooden houses. Irena then also had a town council, a loan and savings bank, a postal office, a pharmacy, a doctor, a steam mill, a brewery for normal beer, a liquor warehouse, three taverns, and among them were the old inns in Bobrownik which were run by Jewish families, and also one small school in Bobrownik. In the general population Jews were included, but their exact count is not known.

The composition of the Irena district took in Demblin, Borovnik, Grombetshizne, Kamelonke, Klestshuvke, Krasnogline, Krokovska, Lason, Masov, Melinkov, Miyejviontshe, Mostshanke, Podviyejviya, Ritshitch, Sendovitch and Zadzare.

Before the establishment of Irena, Jews had previously lived in Bobrownik. A sign of this is the cemetery in Bobrownik where many people were buried from Bobrownik, Stenjitz and later from Irena.

In 1863 the January uprising broke out. According to Yan Skotnitsky, the owner of Bobrownik, the inhabitants of the Irena district took part in the uprising. Some of them fought in the ranks of the rebels, others were engaged in the tasks of gathering news and intelligence and passing that on to the active combatants.

Field Marshal Ivan Paskevitch lived in Demblin. He was the appointed representative of the Czar, so it was from him and through him that all important orders passed. Among those who served the Field Marshall were men who were, body and soul, dedicated to the uprising. These people overheard the consultations of the Field Marshall and his assistants and they looked over at the correspondence and they wrote down important bits of intelligence in order to pass them on to the Polish rebels.

Within the Demblin palace those who sympathized with the uprising organized a little postal system which operated with the greatest of secrecy and conspiracy. Nobody knew who brought the mail into the palace and who got it out.

In Bobrownik, a Jewish family by the name of Motek lived who provided various kinds of products to the palace, such as fish and butter. The Field Marshall knew Motek personally and was very fond of him and in his role as a supplier Motek had

free access into the palace. The directors of the uprising had a conference with Motek and entrusted him with the office of being a messenger and a collector of intelligence in this little spy system of espionage mail from Bobrownik to the palace and back. Together with the fish and butter Motek supplied, he brought in and took out the mail. The whole system of hiding this correspondence was devised with a great deal of skill and efficiency.

In a corridor of the Demblin palace the garments of the Field Marshall were always hanging - summer and winter clothes. Motek devised a plan whereby the mail in the palace which arrived in the winter, would be put into the summer clothes and in summer, in the pockets of the winter overcoats. This was the best organized mail system of all those involved in the rebellion. Thanks to the daring and devotion of Motek, the rebel units were never defeated.

Once there was a bit of intelligence about a transport of money from Petersburg, in order to take care of the expenses of the treasury at the fortress. Motek passed this information onto the rebels who lay in wait in the forest by Jejin, they killed the people who were in the carriages delivering this, and took the money. It was a great amount in a trunk, and that money greatly helped the rebels.

After the failure of the rebellion, Field Marshall Paskevitch moved out of the palace at Demblin to his residence in Homel, along with all that had artistic worth. He even moved out the furniture, the plaques with the coat of arms of the various owners, and the carvings which embellished the front of the palace.

After the death of Field Marshall Paskevitch, Demblin was inherited by his son Fiodore. Fiodore was not in agreement with his father's politics, as a matter of fact he had sympathy for the Poles and sincerely felt for them in their oppressed state. He didn't want to live anymore in the palace at Demblin with the complaint that from every corner the wrongs done to the Polish people were staring out at him.

Fiodore Paskevitch dedicated himself to the service of the Czar and was called to the Czar's private circle as a personal assistant to Alexander III. He received this job as a result of his father's service.

The Demblin palace stood empty. It had been vandalized and emptied of everything of value. The loss of the lovely appearance of the palace quickly went to ruin as well as the park nearby which had become overgrown and wild.

But the total ruin of the palace was accomplished in the First World War. While the palace was rotting away, Irena continued to grow. The new houses that were being built and the increase in the population occurred as a result of the growth of the garrison in the Demblin fortress. Along with that came an increase and development in trade and industry. The Jewish population, a dynamic, hard

working and thrifty one, increased its wealth quickly and the money that was being earned was translated into buying into the purchase of new land and the building of new houses.

Before the outbreak of the First World War, Irena was already a big community. The Rynek was established with beautiful houses, a beautiful city hall and wooden structures which housed businesses and dwellings. The industry developed, workshops were established for tailors, shoemakers, and blacksmiths. People came to Demblin from other settlements. The settlements of Bobrownik and Stenjitiz were almost completely emptied of Jews. Jews from Gniveshov and Ryki came as well.

With the growth of the population, a quick enlargement of the town occurred. New streets were built, like Okulna, which encircled the Rynek on the north side. The Senatorske (which came from Rynek from the north side to Okulna), Potshove and Warshavsky street -- which ran from west to east. The new streets had more structures, stable and with walls, one story houses were built on Okulna and Warshavsky street. Industrial enterprises were established like a sawmill and a big carpentry shop, which belonged to Jews.

With the growth of the population and its needs, the religious life of the Jews developed. On Okulna street a ritual bath and a synagogue and study hall were built. The synagogue was saved from destruction but the ritual bath was destroyed. On Warshavsky street a school was established where Jewish children learned as well. Doctors, dentists and teachers set up shop. The Jews lived at peace with the Polish population, they took an active part in the building up and in the administration of their town. Jews were council people, they collected taxes to build streets and the Rynek.

Demblin got cobbled streets with electric lights.

Irena possessed 5,000 inhabitants, half of whom were Jews.

Irena lived a full life not sensing that on the horizon a storm was moving which was to break out in the First World War.

IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The outbreak of the First World War found the Jews in Irena living mainly on both sides of Okulna street, Senatorske and Potchove and on Rynek. Some Jewish houses were also to be found on Warshavsky street, especially on the north side of it, up to the Irena river.

On the Rynek there was also a building where the town offices were, now one can find there the directorship of the local national council. The Rynek was used as a market place every Wednesday, when there was a big fair. There the peasants' wagons stood with products to sell and there garments and other kinds of merchandise were set out to be sold. The less important market day was on Fridays.

The Jews who lived in Irena in those days were mainly occupied with business. They also had tailor, shoe making, carpenter, and blacksmith workshops and others. At that time in Irena there were about 3,000 Jews living.

The concentration of this great number of Jews created favorable circumstances for the development of their religious and educational life. Thus, even before the First World War, a school was established on Okulna street and a heder was established on Senatorska where Hebrew language was taught. The school was burned down by the Germans as soon as they came into the town in September 1939. Now a city bath is located where that school was. The wooden building that housed the Senatorska heder was destroyed together with other buildings.

Favorable circumstances contributed to the development of Irena as well as to the growth and well being of the Jewish population.

The first days of the War did not shatter the normal life of the town, the War was coming from some place very distant. From the secure life that people had in Irena, people didn't feel threatened, especially because of the enormous fortress which had been developed to protect them. Trade and industry continued to flourish. The well being of the inhabitants grew.

From the left side of the Vistula, closer to the front, Jewish and Polish refugees began to arrive in Irena. They brought with them only their valuables, things that they could get money for. They needed places to stay and food to eat. In exchange for money, they could get whatever they needed in town. But this little period didn't last very long.

In the second half of 1915, the Germans took Demblin. The change of money made everybody feel good. The official currency was the German marc, but the currency of the street was the ruble. This was not very good for business because the marks were not in circulation and for rubles one was not able to get fresh merchandise. The same was true for industry because of a lack of raw material. In 1916, Demblin went over into the hands of the Austrians. From then on craft and business practically died in the town.

The population of Irena suffered a lack of food, clothing, coal, and soap. Those who felt it the worse were the poor, but the rich suffered as well. The unending search of the population which lacked food and other necessities brought about

epidemics. In the beginning there was typhoid fever, and during autumn and winter, typhus. The epidemics destroyed many families. Daily there were funerals. Whole families died. The influenza stopped with the arrival of the really cold weather, but typhus, for many years thereafter, was a threat to the population.

POLAND'S INDEPENDENCE

In 1918, Poland became independent. A new spirit entered the population of Irena.

Regardless of the wounds that they'd received, the population of Irena began to rebuild their lives with hope and belief in a better tomorrow as they began to build their new nation.

The War, hunger and sickness had struck the Jewish population hard so that after the War, the number of Jews was only 1.5 thousand.

The Jewish population, always hard working and thrifty, energetically worked to rebuild business which had been destroyed. Everyday another store would reopen. Within there were empty shelves, but that didn't last long. After awhile merchandise began to appear. On everybody's lips was a smile of happiness that they had made it through the hardest of times. The stores and workshops were really open now, but the trade conditions still weren't really that favorable. The young Polish nation was not capable yet of producing the raw materials and merchandise that were needed by its crafts people and business people. It was quite chaotic. From 1921 to 1923, there was a devaluation of the marc and the prices sky rocketed. The worth of money dropped from hour to hour. The military and other officials would get their salaries paid several times in a month, but that didn't help either.

[See PHOTO-A13 at the end of Section A]

A peasant would sell a cow today, hide the money, and then the next day he couldn't afford to even buy a sheep with the money. Just as fast as trade had expanded did it collapse. Stores closed again and once again Irena went through a very hard period. The year 1922 arrived. The fortress in Demblin was full of military personnel. Within her walls was stationed the 15th Infantry Regiment. The train line activity was reinvigorated. Within the grounds of the old Demblin palace, they began to build structures for what became the flight school. Landless peasants came to settle in Irena. Together with Poles came Jews. The arrival of the military and the growth of the population were a sign of better days.

In 1925 Demblin became the sight of an officer school for fliers. The garrison got bigger. Soldiers, officers and non commissioned officers, came. They were well paid, which helped to renew the commerce.

The favorable conditions and the quick increase in trade influenced the growth of the Jewish population to such an extent that the wounds of the War were quickly healed. The number of Jews grew to 4,500, that was 54% of the overall population of the district of Irena.

The quick building up and the development of Irena was thanks to the favorable geographic situation of Demblin, because the intersection of the train lines from the south to the north and from the east to the west, were the roads used for war. The transportation of goods along the Vistula and the surrounding rivers to Warsaw was the cheapest route of communication.

In the 1930's Irena lived through the best period. The overflowing streets were not able to contain all the Jews and that called for the construction of new streets. The Jewish contractors bought sites on the Bank street and built houses there. The same thing also happened on Warshavsky street. There it was mainly businesses that were constructed. The banks played a very important role in the development of Irena and these banks were directed by Jews.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Whereas Irena was a center of Jewish population, the need was created for organizing a religious life that was local. To this task, with the support of the Jewish community, a synagogue was built on Okulna street as well as a bath nearby. After the building of the synagogue the community brought a Rabbi, Rabbi Emanuel Gershon Rabinovitch, who was very wise with a distinguished education and an exceptional intelligence. With his authority he gave the tone that established good relations between the Jews and the Polish population. But about that, a little bit later.

Rabbi Emanuel Rabinovitch, with the help of the Hasidim, directed the religious life of all the Jews. With the help of the Hasidim, he obtained from the chief of the regiment that was stationed there, an exchange of money for food, so that the Jewish soldiers could eat from kosher Jewish homes. Most of the yeshiva students profited from this arrangement. Everyday they went from the regiment into town to eat at the houses of Jews.

In the regiment, which was stationed at Demblin, Jews were employed. Rabbi Rabinovitch had influence over them. On important holidays the Jewish soldiers marched in rows into synagogue to pray. On Passover and Succoth, the Jewish soldiers went everyday to eat as a religious obligation. Each regiment had its

Jewish soldiers sent under the supervision of a non-commissioned officer. Over all of them a special officer was assigned who was the delegate from the military authority.

Rabbi Rabinovitch received this official delegate at his house and the soldiers were well received by the Jewish community.

Each year the Rabbi gave the oath to the soldiers. After the giving of the oath, the Rabbi, with the religious representatives of other religions, was the guest of the regiment. More than once you could see a military Chaplain having a very cordial talk with the Rabbi. If the Rabbi, on occasion, didn't have his own carriage, he was often invited to ride along with the Chaplain who would drive back to town in his automobile.

MATTERS OF HEALTH

In Irena there wasn't an organized service for the sick. There were only hospitals in bigger towns. If there was a real need for that kind of care the Jews from Irena went to Jewish hospitals in Warsaw and Radom. Quicker help for the population was provided by private doctors: Kornelshtein and the healer Vanapol. The dentists, Dr. Parisova, Chana Vanapol and the technical-dentists, Ahron and Natan Vanapol.

Since the population strictly observed religious laws, they only would eat meat that was slaughtered in the proper way by a ritual butcher. The supervision of the religious slaughter was conducted by the veterinarian, Kalman Paris.

The Jewish doctors, in general, were esteemed by the Polish population as well. Especially honored was the service of the Vanapol family, even now you can hear among the people from the old generation, very, very high praise for the healing abilities and medical help that they gave to the sick.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Until Poland's independence, the Jewish children studied almost exclusively in heders, not in public schools. At the beginning of the period when compulsory education was introduced, Jewish children went to the "Poveshechne" school, together with Polish children.

(See PHOTO-A14 at the end of Section A)

After finishing public school, a lot of the Jewish children studied further in the city high school, together with Polish youth.

From that time when Poland received its independence, the activity of the schools in Irena developed quickly. One school wasn't able to take care of all of the students. They had to open school number two on Warshavsky street, and soon after, a high school.

In the public school, the Jewish children who wished, were allowed to take Saturday off. But not in the high school. The administration there, because each day required some special study to take place, would not allow them that kind of leeway. It's not possible after so many years to list all of the Jewish children in the high school. I'll just list a few of them: Shlome Shtern - a son of a poor widow, Lena Shtern, Chana Shteinbuch, a daughter of the Pinkuses, who lives today in Germany, and Perla Ekheiser, the daughter of Reb Yosef. The last person finished her high school education in secret with the help of Professor Peshvilska.

A cultural life besides the movies hardly didn't exist. There were two movie theaters, "Lotnik", and the one in the fortress. There were 3 active days in the week, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. On Fridays, most of the Jewish children would come, although also on other days they would come a great deal as well. Not long before the beginning of the War, a new cinema was built on Warshavsky street and it was a partnership between Jews and Poles. The movie theater, Irena, outlived the War, and is used by the population until today.

BANKS

The development of Irena, the need of the businessmen and of the Jewish population, brought forth a need to create banks where one could locate capital as well as in time of special need, get credit. To this task, on the Bank street [*Bankova*], a bank building was built. Money for the bank was raised through an action committee, the bank director was Yozef.

In the first years when the business climate was favorable the banks were a very beneficial part of commerce. And the people who were in the bank committee, who had founded it, did very well for themselves. It wasn't however capable of serving the whole population and so a cooperative bank was founded on Warshavsky street in the house of Zjelechovsky. Its name alone demonstrated that it was a bank of shareholder members. The director of the bank was the lawyer Kannaryenfogel. To the directorship belonged Teichman, Ekheiser, Yosef Shulman, Freyis and Weinberg.

The cooperative bank showed itself to be a very useful institution, not only for the Jewish population, but also for the Polish.

The cooperative bank conducted useful work until the outbreak of the Second World War.

OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The development of Irena and the founding of various institutions, meant that there was an increased need to develop the lines of communication with the national administration. It called forth the need for a judicial bureau. To this task were assigned 2 officers for judicial consultation which were directed by the lawyer Kannaryenfogel who was also the President of the cooperative bank and by Yaacov Ekheiser, together with Joseph Ekheiser.

The Jewish community was also active and it also took part in giving judicial advice. The Jewish population didn't go eagerly into the Polish court system. So all legal disputes which were among Jews were heard by the Jewish council and if the council wasn't able to bring the two sides to an agreement, it went to a religious court. The person who stood in judgment there was Joseph Ekheiser. A judgment from the Jewish court was one that no Jew could violate, whether he won or lost. With a decision from a religious court, he had to make his peace with it. But the legal disputes between Jews and Poles were dealt with through the State court system. The closest court was in Pulaw because Irena belonged to the Pulaw district.

INDUSTRY, CRAFTS AND TRADE

Branches of industries like these were in Jewish hands: banking, a beer brewery where liquor was pored into bottles, a factory of soda water, a sawmill, tailor workshops, shoe workshops, a special boot workshop, blacksmiths, locksmiths and carpenters.

Most of the commerce was in Jewish hands except for the pharmacy, the pharmaceutical warehouse, a store with hard liquor, writing supplies, a tobacco warehouse, stores where pork flesh was sold and one cooperative food store. In the last years there were 2 or 3 colonial stores set up. There was also one restaurant in Polish hands.

Other services that Jews supplied included hairdressers, teamsters, cab drivers and porters.

Eighty percent of the hair dressers were Jewish. Some of them were on Jewish streets, like Rynek and Okulna. The biggest part of them were on Warshavsky street and served Poles.

The development of industry and trade couldn't have been successful without the development of transportation. A class of teamsters was established. They were very, very necessary, because Irena was 3 kilometers from the train station. From the loading point on the Vistula, it was 2.5 kilometers away.

Since the teamsters couldn't do all the required work by themselves, they hired workers to load and unload merchandise. These workers, with time, developed into skilled porters.

Besides teamsters, the cab drivers served the population, 90% of them were Jewish.

From the ranks of the businessmen and the industrialists I will mention and list only those who one remembers until today.

Businessmen who dealt in food stuffs -- Adelman - who had a food warehouse; Tschatshkes - who had a store of food; Melitzkevitch - who had a food store. The owners were well known for their fair way of doing business and the quality of their merchandise.

A store where iron products were sold belonged to Rozen and Mendel Rozenberg. The latter had a wholesale business and supplied all of the institutions in Demblin. He was the supplier for the military. There were 2 smaller stores where iron products were sold, on Okulna street and on Rynek.

Manufacturing sites also belonged to Zjelechovsky and Rueben. There were also smaller ones where on normal days the trade took place within a store, and on days of the big market, they would set out their wares on the Rynek. With their *straganes* [wares or garments] they also traveled to Gniveshov on market day. And on Thursdays they went to Ryki. The trade in *straganes* was spread over between the branches of clothes and shoes.

Among the well known firms, Teichman's store of radio and electric tools should be noted; the furniture store of Price; the watch store of Shulman. There were also a variety of different stores where shoes were sold, hats, where there was business in grain, in vegetables and fruits, in paint, in fowl, milk products, bicycles, tools, soda water and sweets.

There were also 2 lumber yards where building materials were sold. One was run by Rueben Yosef and Rozeman on Warshavsky street, and the second on Sochotzky street belonged to Sheinzicht. The sawmill on Bank street belonged to Rozenman.

The beer factory and representing the Haberbush firm was Kamiyan. His warehouse was on the Bank street. The 2 soda factories belonged to Weinburg and Gilibter. They served practically the whole population of the town.

Well known and esteemed because of their courteous service, tasty gefilte fish and other delicacies were the taverns of Luxemburg on Warshavsky street and Beckerblut on Rynek. A specialty of Luxemburg's tavern was the *Fish-Machlim*

[fish delicacy], cooked in the Jewish fashion, and Beckerblut's tavern was well known for its wonderful cooked goose and good beer. The taverns were frequently sought out by those who loved good food, Jews as well as gentiles. Every day except for Sabbath, the taverns were overflowing with guests.

In Irena there were 4 Jewish bakeries which serviced the Jewish population with a variety of different kinds of breads, challahs, bagels, pretzels and sweets. The bakery of Natan Kaminsky, on Warshavsky street baked almost exclusively for the Poles, although the bakery of Kaminsky's son, on Okulna street, baked for everybody. Bread was also made at Shtamler's bakery on Okulna and Krinchaltz' on Rynek and also at Feldfeders.

The trade in cattle flesh was completely in the hands of Jews. Butcher stores were run by Korman and Adelshtein on Warshavsky street, Rechtman on Rynek and Puterflam on Senatorsky street.

A supplier of many meats to the military for many years and of hay, especially for the 15th Infantry Regiment, was Pinchas Shteinbuch; a supplier for the military hospital was Lena Shtern, she furnished calf meat, butter, eggs, honey and cheese.

The sale of state lottery tickets was conducted by Yosef Nai, who lives today in Lodz.

Tailor shops were 90% in Jewish hands. The well known tailors were Luxemburg on Warshavsky street who was a master tailor with a diploma from Paris. The highest measure of elegance was an outfit made by Luxemburg. That's why really almost all of the officers and non commissioned officers had their uniform jackets and trousers sewn by the Luxemburg firm. The young and less well paid non-commissioned officers had their uniforms made by Moshe Danovitch and others. Besides these, there were also tailor shops run by Hertzky, Borkovitch, Lindover, Rosentzweig, Katchke and Europa.

Rosentzweig and Europa, at the same time, dealt in finished clothes. In the selling of already completed garments, other people also took part. And that included people who didn't have their own shops but put their garments out for sale at the markets. These took place on Wednesday in Irena, and Thursday in Ryki. The same was true for shoes and for hats and wash and bedding.

Among the shoemakers one can count Adelshtein and Choleva. They made shoes according to order and measurement. Other shoemakers made shoes which they simply then sold at the market.

With the passage of 25 years, it's not possible without the relevant documents to list all of the Jewish families and their names. The names have vanished from memory. All the documents were destroyed in the time of the War.

Of the families which lived in Irena, one should list the following: the singer Borenshtein, Federbush, Zilberman, Rubinstein, Laibruder, Freidman, Ainshidler, Tzucker, Goldberg, Kaminsky's son Yitzhak and daughter Polye.

Until the year 1936, the growth of the population was rapid. Over a hundred births a year, and that's while the mortality rate was small, about 20 people a year.

THE COUNT OF JEWS BECOMES SMALLER

Despite the great increase and the low mortality rate, the number of Jews diminished. In 1938 they were 46% of the overall population: from 4,500 in 1936 to 4,000 in 1938. The reason for the reduction of the Jewish population must be sought in emigration to bigger cities where it was easier to get work and make better wages or where the general business climate was more favorable. As an example I can cite Europa, despite the fact that he had several houses in Irena, he went to Warsaw, and there he bought a house and conducted a business on the Elektoralna street. I mean that in the emigration to other cities, Europa was not just a lone individual, there were many others who did the same thing.

Jews took an active role in the life of the town. They were council members and the village magistrate position was held for many years by David Rubinshtein.

In the time of ever growing fascism in the country and the arrival of the plague of Hitlerism in Germany, there wasn't the least persecution of Jews in Irena. The business and life in general went on very quietly. The population worked and earned, not anticipating that from the west, a black cloud was approaching. The day neared of the outbreak of the Second World War.

Zayejeje, December 2, 1966

PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN DEMBLIN

BY CHAIM-MEIR GOLDBERG / RAMAT-AVIV

Summer 1957, I came back to the Poland that I had left with my friend Yichael Zambner, and we traveled to our hometown, in order to catch a last glance of the place where we were born, where we grew up and where we fought for a more beautiful and better tomorrow. We walk around these quiet, almost empty streets of Demblin and into our memories come various images of near and dear Jews who met a savage fate in the years 1939-1945 and who were killed at the hand of Hitler's villains. We remembered the events and the incidents from those times and they call forth a smile and sometimes a closed fist as we remember...

Looking in this way at the town 12 years now after the great tragedy, I continue to think of somebody different, somebody not here and of something not right before me.

THREE NAMES - SYMBOLS

My pal and I remember the different names which were almost like different spirits of our home town. Ivangorod was the name when the Russian empire reached here. Ivangorod symbolized the terror of the Czarist brutality and of the Cossack whip for the anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish pogroms. The famous fortress stood for an unjust regime for torments and persecutions that the Jewish population had to endure.

By contrast the name Modzjitz symbolized a completely different world, one of Torah and of wisdom, beautiful Hasidic melodies and the Hasidic community and world.

Demblin represented a new time and epic, new songs. This is the name of the city of our generation which had torn itself away from the established older generation's conservatism. Demblin with its new way of life displaced Ivangorod and Modzjitz. A new Jewish life sprouted up. Political parties, societies, institutions; in rebellion against parents and against the former way of life. This was a process that went on not only in Demblin but in many little towns and cities all over Poland, during the "*Shturem-and-Drong Period*" [Cultural Upheaval] after the First World War, when this period upset and challenged the mentality, the way of life, and the psychology of the Jews.

Now we remember that the synagogue and study hall was really a center of this radical change...

THE SYNAGOGUE

In our religious study center, the synagogue, we didn't just have religious scholars and people who were conversant with the Torah, but also free thinkers and revolutionaries as well as zealous Hasidim. Here in the beginning of the 20's there were scores of Jewish boys who would study: some by themselves, some in little groups and some in a methodical collective way. Sometimes these groups were run by Jewish people who were really learned in the Torah: like Yankl Srulches (Apelhat), Yaacov-Mindel, Simcha Albek.

[See PHOTO-A15 at the end of Section A]

Yankl Apelhat was kind of the leader of the scholars and really the person who was responsible for the yeshiva as well. A Jew with an athletic build and appearance and a really effective organizer. He knew how to organize and provide *esin tag* [meals at other people's houses] for his yeshiva boys. When the community was having some difficulty constructing a new bath house, Reb Yankl sent his boys from the synagogue out to assist in the work. They got it done in a very complete way. When, in the neighboring community Moszczanka, there was a tremendous fire at that town, which was inhabited only by gentiles, Reb Yankl mobilized the yeshiva boys and they went over and helped to put the fire out.

Yisraelish Apelhat, the very religious Hasid, had four sons, all of whom were teachers at the synagogue and study hall: Yankl, Yitzhak, Shmai and Moshe. They were very strong young men, really they were titans. Nobody dared to tangle with them or tease them in any way. Shmai used to with one hand pick up a whole pile of books and it didn't seem to phase him in the least.

Yankl Yisraelish was somebody who had quite a temper, as a scholar and as a Hasid. He never was happy with his students and at every opportunity he screamed at them: idiots, retches, *shkatzim* [little gentile boys]... If a pupil just stumbled and didn't say something right, he screamed and said: "grab him", and that meant that they really would make an example of this little boy. They laid him down on the table in order to get him to apologize. They pinched him and they stuck him with little sharp objects. They even whipped him a little bit.

Pity the poor boy who had to come to Yankl after taking his nap on Sabbath for an examination. He spared no kind of punishment on the head and body from the person who was taking the test if he wasn't very fast and agile at answering the questions he asked them. By contrast everybody was overjoyed if they were assigned to take their test with Simcha Albek or Yaacov-Mindel. These Jews studied with the students and they'd even honor them with a glass of tea and cake for Sabbath or they'd even present them with an apple.

There were teachers in the synagogue who were described as having "fiery heads" [hot-tempered], people like Zelek (who is today in America), Yisrael Tbeya - a blond, very thin young man, Shlomo Makler and the Rabbi's grandsons, Shlomo-Yechtzkl, Hershel and Yitzhak, they were all killed by the Germans.

From the older generation of teachers one could find at the synagogue: Efraim Traler (Kuzol), Laibel Traler (the deaf Laibel), Aly Foigls and others. Efraim and Laibel were also very good artists and they carved the lions on the ark of the Torah and they painted eagles and stags and deer on the eastern wall. Aly Foigles was a very quiet man and he used to sit on a bench by the window and immerse himself in *Rambam* [Maimonides - a text by one of the great commentators], and the people used to gossip that he also secretly would read secular books as well.

The synagogue boys from the learning hall had a special ability in singing. There was a special way they had of doing it... this was called singing to the beat. It seems that this is a direct product of the influence of the Modzjitzer Rabbi and his way of singing and creating melodies.

THE FIRST SWALLOWS

After Poland became independent, an intense political and social activity began to develop in the Jewish community and it reached Demblin. The election campaign of the *Seyem* [Polish parliament] activated all of the parties, and the center of agitation and of debate was still the synagogue. There we had discussions but now we described it with new terminology, we called them meetings. One such meeting, which took place between the prayers at *Mincha* and *Ma'ariv* [afternoon and evening], one of these meetings I remember very well. Matel Batner screamed down from the reading desk about justice, bread, work and freedom. Everybody was really impressed with his speech. After the talk was over, a group of young friends, among them also young girls (Chana-Gitel Wasserman, Dina Baigelman and others), sang the International. Imagine today the experiences of Yechaskel Vorshever, who then sat by the eastern wall and was studying while all this other stuff was going on. All of a sudden he overheard a song like that, like the International, and furthermore he hears it sung by girls, and he in a very nasty way murmured: "One might almost think it's angels singing here." They weren't angels singing but they were the first swallows from the new era in Demblin -- that's what that meaning really was. It marked a departure. It was the promise of a spring of the busy coming to life of the cultural and social and political life of the Jewish town.

My friend and I distance ourselves from the building where once upon a time the synagogue was. We've gone away a few steps -- and there we were at the totally empty town square. And then came another wave of memories! Here's where we had our first cultural get together. Here is where we used to have the question

evenings, which we all looked forward to. We would stick our questions, we young people, in to the little box with a great deal of excitement and curiosity. One was always sure that he was going to get an answer to all of the questions that interested him. One was of course looking for justice, wanted to know about an individual book, about a writer, about a political event. And always we were able to find people who sympathized with us who could answer everything for us. These were people who didn't avoid any questions at all. One of these people was Yankl Bubis. Everybody was extremely fond of him. He was a very learned person and somebody who was always working on himself, because he wanted to improve himself and expand his horizons. In the beginning of the 20's, he returned from the Soviet Union. Besides Russian and Russian literature, he picked up on Polish and Yiddish. His distinguished looking face, well rounded intellect and intelligence, always commanded great respect from everybody.

His wife as well, Dina Baigelman Bubis, distinguished herself with the same virtues as Yankl. She always was present at these question evenings. Both of them, together with their daughter, were killed by the Nazi murderers.

In the culture association we had regular lectures and discussions. Each week the teacher Kannaryenfogel, who came from Gilitsia, a man with radical perspective, took charge of the meetings which were usually about a scientific theme. We would have a little discussion group, a circle of young people, who would participate in it. Soon after the occupation of Demblin, he was shot by the Germans. His wife and son died in a camp.

An interesting personality was Andja Vanapol, a dentist, the wife of the folk doctor, Yarmeyohu Vanapol. She came from Lublin. A refined, very sympathetic woman, with a warm Jewish heart. Her lectures about hygiene were always attended by a big audience. She died in the Second World War.

DRAMA CIRCLE

In the culture association a drama circle was created under the leadership of Rafael Baigelman (who is today in Brazil). He was the son of Laibish Baigelman, who was a devout Hasid and a very effective leader of prayers, a wise Jew and the father of gifted children. Rafael distinguished himself as an artist. Thanks to him the drama circle had very competent artists. They were amateurs but they were well trained: My sister, Chana Goldberg (Paris) was among them, Aba Bantman (Paris), David and Yosef-Nota Cholevinsky, Shlomo Machler, Ita Samet (America) and others. The performances were given at the fire station. And the proceeds from the performances went to defense lawyers for political prisoners or to improve and make more beautiful the local landscape or to buy books for the library.

This broad based culture work was all carried out just a few feet from the synagogue, really right in front of the eyes of the pious old fathers, who had decided to carry out a war with the youth. Our strength though was just too much. We were too strong for them. Those who had an inclination to make war had to think about it twice to realize if it was really worth starting with people like us and there really was never any serious incidents of intimidation.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Parallel with the culture association, the professional associations or unions were created and these met at Black Simcha's courtyard. Leading in this organization to defend the interests of workers were: Avram Abramovitz, Yosef-Neta Cholevinsky, Avigdor Barkovitz and others. The first serious and difficult undertaking was to try to get an eight hour work day. In this case we had to really struggle against the hard headed opposition of the owning class -- those who provided work, those who really had economic power. At the same time, the illegal communist party became very active. Red flags would always be flying in the city, even at the fortress and at the train station. Whenever they could get a chance they hung a red flag. People risked duress for doing this. A lot of people did end up in jail. Many of the people I've previously mentioned here ended up in jail. The local union was closed down apparently because they were tainted with being associated with this type of activity and the same fate fell on the culture union as well. They made people pay heavily, they tormented people.

All of this happened around the year 1925.

WAR WITH THE BURIAL SOCIETY

After a short time, three of our comrades died: Shmuel Haver, Natan-David Zisman, and a grandson of Yitzhak Shuchtes who was drowned. In each of the three cases the burial society decided to bury them behind the fence [in the Jewish cemetery]. Our youth didn't agree with that designation, they didn't want them to be buried there, and they buried the three comrades where they wanted to bury them. But we were afraid that the burial society was going to come steal the bodies and try to bury them where they wanted to and so we had people stand watch at the graves. Every night a different group of young people would spend the night there. And things even came to blows. The thing finally was resolved when this group of Jews [burial society] had to publicly ask forgiveness on Sabbath after praying and promise that they would never more defile the dead. This was reported in the People's Newspaper of Warsaw at the time.

WE FIND OUR LIBRARY IN THE WELL

If you overlook the kinds of harassment and persecution that the Polish regime inflicted on our community in those days, the cultural work we were doing was going full swing. By this time we didn't concern ourselves with these question evenings. But we concentrated on getting guest speakers from Warsaw, people who had a name. Our goal was always to get people who really were knowledgeable, who had something to offer us in intellectual fields. Peretz Markish [*a poet*] gave a wonderful lecture called "Expressionism and Impressionism in Literature and Painting". The very facile, excellent speaker, Leo Finkelshtein, the writer Melech Ravitsh, the political activist and free thinker, the Pole, Veyenyava-Dlogashevsky. The hall in the fire house was full at each one of these evenings.

It was always easier to bring together a big audience than it was to always get the official permission from the regime to have these lectures and undertakings. The regime always kept a close watch on what was going on and the police were never far away. After awhile we were able to open our sessions at the courtyard of Ekybola Einshedler, on Riker street. Our ability to do that was thanks to literary evenings which concerned themselves with various writers and books. We were able to establish a library with a very rich selection of treasures. With all of this activity, collecting books and being interested in politics and literature, the comrades Yankl Bubis, the Baigelman's Godel Milgram, Yankl Sharfartz, Shlomo Makler, Moshe Zambner and others and others and others.

A certain Sabbath afternoon, when we came into the association, to the place that we would meet, we all stopped in our tracks and we were startled. The bookshelves had been torn out and there wasn't a book to be found anywhere. Not one book anywhere in the whole library. So all of us immediately set about to look for the treasure that had been spirited away and stolen. Everybody started looking around and somebody quickly happened to notice in the courtyard of a building nearby that there in the well all of our books had been thrown. Nobody had to conduct a big investigation to figure out what had happened because we all knew who was responsible for this ugly work, it was the pious folk of the town, with the help of some underworld thugs, young men who could be counted on to do these kinds of things. But we didn't stand around trying to figure out what to do very long. We let somebody climb down into the well, we got the books out and to tell the truth, they didn't get to enjoy their viciousness for very long and we're the ones who really had the final revenge because we were able to dry out all the books and put them back where they were in the first place.

THE TORMENTS DO NOT SEIZE

The local of the union often had uninvited guests, the police and secret agents. They would check up on people, threaten and even sometimes shut the place

down. They would often arrest people who both were working underground and those who were working out in the open, on a daily basis. We worried about the people who were finding their way into jail. Sometimes it was a lawyer, sometimes it was a worker. We couldn't let the families of these people go hungry because often the people who were arrested were the sole bread winners. At this point there was a lot of activity by the drama society, because only thanks to their performances were we able to raise enough money to take care of all these expenses. The drama circle got stronger with the arrival of some new amateur actors: Shlomo Mekler, Chaim-Shlomo Zeyman, Chaim Baigelman, Hadassa Rappaport, Moshe Gorfinkel and Rachtsha Bagelman with her mighty and impressive voice. The drama circle also had guest performances in the surrounding towns and they brought a lot of joy and a lot of encouragement. The police viewed this kind of success as if it were a thorn in their eye. In the year 1928 they shut the place down and a second time we were back in the street.

But who in those years really paid that much attention or let the machinations of the police stand in their way? In a very short amount of time we opened a new culture local, not far from Avram Lundever's house. With fresh energy we rebuilt the library. The professional union grew. And at the lectures we discussed theories of Bucharen [*an anarchist philosopher*] and Lenin, but we had to stay a certain distance outside and couldn't enter beyond a certain point in the town. In one room Yankl Sharfartz would explain something with great belief and intensity. In another room Avram Abramovitz would hammer away at a Marxist tenet.

The association did not forget its essential tasks, among them to work to better the economic conditions of the workers.

The elections for the parliament came about in 1928 and the police presence got really annoying and heavy, they wouldn't leave us alone. The election literature, from the communist lists, although they were able to list their candidates legally, their literature was routinely confiscated. Mendel Borenshtein, Moshe Gorfinkel and Yisrael Vatzek were detained at the train station where they were passing out this literature. On the spot they got beat up badly by the police and led off to the city jail. Some of the comrades from the town gathered under the window of the jail house in order to cheer them up. But that was hardly necessary because they were pretty tough themselves and their spirits were high, especially as they had still been able to hide their forbidden literature on their persons. They were able to pass out their leaflets that they'd been able to hide, and everybody was quite interested in this information and the issues of this rag of the communist literature. They were able to find a way even while they were in jail to distribute the literature that they still had with them. They didn't have anything else to do and they weren't closely supervised.

One evening before the election, when a big group of young people had gathered in the street, a police official suddenly rode in on his horse. It didn't take long

before people had managed to tie little pieces of paper that had the names of the communist candidates on them to the tail of the horse. Another policeman who had been passing by discovered this and began to chase the young people. One of the people who was running away, while he was running managed to flatten the policeman. This protector of the regime was lying all by himself on the ground. Everybody else in the crowd including this person, managed to escape.

These kinds of incidents only encouraged us in our belief and we felt we were taking wing even though we were poor Jewish youth who had a lot to put up with. We felt we were making progress.

THE WAR WITH THE UNDERWORLD

We, the progressive youth, had our share of trouble and harassment from the Jewish underworld of Demblin, the unofficial bosses of the town. They had a monopoly on the coal business. They dictated who in the market place would have a space to do business, who could set up to sell boxes and baskets of apples, pears, plums, cherries, berries. One had to make way for them and give them a kick back. They wanted a kick back, they had their own system of transportation to carry goods from and to Warsaw. They also had the first truck in town which carried goods to the capital and because of their position as having monopoly on these kinds of things and because of the terror they were willing to use, the Jews lived in fear of them. For many years they ruled the city by might and by violence.

In 1930 the worker tailor, Mechel Abramovitch, went on strike. His employer forbid him to work anywhere. The union came to his defense and the employer got a couple of thugs from the underworld and hired them to give the union what for. On the other side, the union sent out a call for its members and they decided that they were going to have it out and teach the thugs who were running the place a big lesson.

On a certain Sabbath afternoon, both groups had it out in the street. They fought and beat each other and it was clear that on that occasion the group that won were the workers. But the dear boys from the underworld would not rest after a humiliation like that and later they attacked a couple of youths from our side viciously with knives. They wanted to take revenge for a couple of their boys who we were able to send to the hospital that particular afternoon. Not long after that we realized we were not alone in our struggle. And from Warsaw a couple of porters showed up. These guys were very tough and certainly stronger than the guys from Demblin and they [*the thugs*] decided at that point it was time to be quiet. And more, the same porters had in Warsaw slashed the tires of their prized truck. They realized that the war was no longer worth fighting and in the press they agreed to resolve their differences with the professional association, they

paid for the damages, and they agreed to send packages and help to the union people who had been arrested as a result of these events. They also had to pay for the lawyers who had to be hired to defend people. Finally, the guy who started it all, this tailor, got his job back.

So the victory over the underworld gave us a lot of prestige, we, the organized youth.

THE PERSONALITIES WHO ARE NO LONGER

Our walk through Demblin in the year 1957, the two of us, former residents of the town, continued a little further. With each step there were new memories and fresh recollections of a place which once upon a time was just full of Jewish life and Jewish culture, but now, not even a trace of the former Jewish Demblin.

[See PHOTO-A 16 at the end of Section A]

Right here, my friend said, was where his family lived. Leizor Rymer (Zambner) with his sons and daughters and grandchildren. Only two sons, Moshe and Yichaël, live today in America. Their father was a work man from an old line of working people. A little bit further in the street where the synagogue was, my own grandfather, Yisrael Schneider lived, a very respected and well thought of Jew. He worked his whole life practically as a tailor for women. But in his early years, with his scissors and needle, he only made clothes for men. However he couldn't make a decent living that way, so he became a women's tailor. But, being a very pious Jew, he went to the Rabbi to ask him a question and the question was if he was allowed to measure a woman. The Rabbi answered that just like the famous Rabbi Akiva told his students once upon a time, when one of his students was going to dance with his bride at the wedding, so Rabbi Akiva told him that you should just make believe that you're dancing with a log. Whether or not that's really the way my grandfather looked at things, I'm not really sure. But he was a tailor for women, and he remained that for the rest of his life. Everyday, early in the morning, he went to the synagogue, he studied a little bit from the *mishna*, he davened. Then after he ate, he sat down with his needle until late at night. On Fridays, he had two little *pushkas* [money boxes], one for helping people who were sick and the other one for poor brides. Before lighting the Sabbath candles he would empty the boxes which had play money in them for his grandchildren to play with.

Friday night after eating, we used to go to Grandpa's house. His big beautiful beard and his luminous eyes made his face very warm. We were four daughters and one son. The majority of his children lived near Grandpa. He was always worrying or thinking up ways that he could add a little room or a little wing to his house to accommodate his family. The only children who worked themselves up

to other kinds of jobs (Leibol Harwitz and Aba Branshpegel) went out and got their own apartments.

Chana -- the Torah scholar, Yankl Shapiro. He died young, but he left two sons, Moshe and Minsha and four daughters. Only two of them live today in Paris, Esther and Baila. From the whole big family of my grandfather, there are only a few individuals remaining. My parents died before the War. My father was a Torah scholar and a very famous, revered leader of prayer. He lived with a lot of financial difficulties and a lot of the time he couldn't even provide his children with a little piece of bread. Our apartment consisted of a room and kitchen and 9 of us lived there. Still, he was always in a good mood and always very pleasant and he was always very well thought of by the rest of the town.

Oh where are you dear and beloved Jews of Demblin?!

POLITICAL PARTIES IN DEMBLIN-MODZJITZ

BY ARYE BUCKSPAN, TEL AVIV

Demblin of the 1920's was divided between two extreme camps. One was of the religious, conservative Jews; the other was of the trade unionists, who were influenced by the Communists.

Almost all the religious Jews were Hasidic. Most of them were followers of the Guerr-Modzjitz Rabbis.

The Hasidim used to pray in their *shtiebelach* [small, home-style synagogues and houses of study], while the rest of the Jews had their services in the great synagogue and in a special, adjacent room. The small annex was the synagogue of choice for the middle class, craftsmen and porters, and was dubbed *Des Zionistische Stieble* [the Zionist house of study]. Behind it was the *mikve* [ritual bath house], which was known as Mendle P.'s domain.

[See PHOTO-A17 at the end of Section A]

The Guerr Hasidim were unique for their prayer services and festivities. They had their own synagogue which had been built under the supervision of my father, the late Moshe Buckshpan, and was also registered in my father's name. Almost every Saturday night, after Sabbath, the Guerr Hasidim brought a barrel of beer and celebrated until well past midnight. In winter time, the place was heated with a furnace. The best among the singers was my brother-in-law, the late Hershel Weintraub. He, his wife (my sister) Freindle and their four children were sent to their deaths in the first transport from Demblin. May God avenge their deaths.

My father, Moshe Buckshpan, was an avid follower of the Rabbi of Guerr. When I was born, my father named me after Yehuda Leib Arye, the Great Rabbi of Guerr, otherwise known as *Sefat Emeth* [Language of Truth]. My father used to travel to the Rabbi of Guerr for almost every holiday, and sometimes took me with him.

My father, may peace be upon him, died of a heart attack in the winter of 1921 (when I was nine years old). He left the house to chop some wood for heating when his heart stopped beating. The sorrow in our family was great. May his memory be honored.

The *tzaddic* [righteous] of Modzjitz, Rabbi Yisrael Taub, used to sing in the *Melave Malka* service [escorting the queen - bidding farewell to the Sabbath] on Saturday nights, attracting crowds of people that surrounded him. Many of his songs are the subjects of legends. One is on the homeless. Another was on a Rabbi whose leg had to be operated on in the hospital. He refused to be anaesthetized and asked his

doctors to undergo the surgery while sober. And so it was. During the operation he created the well-known *niggun* [Hasidic folk song] *Azkara* [I shall remember], which had 36 verses. He died in 1921. May his memory be blessed.

The Trade Union, under the influence of the Communists, was well organized. It took good care of the workers, both materially and spiritually. They would often go on strike. They had much power and immense influence over the youngsters and the public as a whole.

The town had almost no Zionist Pioneer youth movement, although there were several veteran Zionists, such as the well-known *Hovev Zion* [literally, fond of Zion, member of the early Zionist movement], the late Avraham Shmeltzstein. He was the first among the city folks to travel to the land of Israel with his family (his daughter, Chana Tishman, is an active member with the executive committee of the Demblin-Modzjitz Organization in Israel). Shmeltzstein's journey made an immense impression on the townspeople. In addition, Shmeltzstein had published several books on the Hovevei Zion movement.

There were other veteran Zionists, such as Yosef Gilibter, Berrish Silbergleit, Moshe Kamin and Shmuel Nachum Luxenburg, who had headed the Demblin community before the war broke out. They perished in the Holocaust. May their memory be with us forever and ever.

Naturally, there were many more sympathizers of the movement, but they were too busy making a living and did nothing for the party. This was the case until we -- Yaacov Rozenberg, Yisrael Yom-Tov, Binyamin Zilberman, Meir Smit, Ahron Garbovnik, Yichiel Bubis and myself -- left the yeshiva and began our pioneering activity. The late Yichiel Bubis became ill, in 1935, with appendicitis and had to be operated on immediately. Because Demblin had no hospital, he was transported to Pulaw, but died on the way. He was very active and did much in organizing a Pioneer movement in Demblin. Except for him, all his colleagues are in Israel.

We attached to us a group of young women, including sisters Sara and Tova Ointuglich, Chana Rozenberg, Sara Helperin, Pesah Buckspan, sisters Tova and Tzirel Weinberg, Rivka Yomtov and Tzevyah Obest. The sisters Sara and Tova, Chana, Sara and Pesah are in Israel. Chava and sisters Tova and Tzirel are in America. Rivka and Tzevyah perished in the Holocaust. Tzevyah was sent to death in the first transport, because she limped. She was a very active member and a very good singer. Her room was the first meeting place for the organizing work of the Zionist movement in Demblin.

*

We were faced by great difficulties posed by religious Jews, who did not allow their children to join such a secular movement. They came to our club to take out their

sons and daughters. We would put a friend on guard to announce whom they were coming to look for, and we would hide him.

But most of the disturbances to our activities were caused by the extremely leftist communist youth, who would threaten us and even have scuffles with us.

Once we organized a public protest rally against the 1929 events in Eretz Israel [then Palestine]. We wrote the notices and posted them with our own hands. When we assembled to start the rally, the extremist youth appeared intending to disrupt. When our member Meir Smit (today living in Israel) asked for quiet in Hebrew, it was enough to blow up the rally.

Once I returned home late at night from the pioneer secretariat meeting. An unknown assailant waited for me near our home and whipped me twice with a leather strap. He said "So much for Zionism! Here's Zionism for you!", and escaped.

Another time, at a meeting, we confined ourselves to the room. The more that disruptions occurred, the more devoted that we became to our work. We collected penny by penny to rent a room of our own for the movement. With much devoted enthusiasm we decorated the room with Zionist flags and photos of Herzl and Gordon.

We all raised money for the Jewish National Fund, showed motion pictures, organized a league for the Working Eretz Yisrael [*the Zionist Labor Movement*]. Every Friday we arranged a question and answer symposium, every year a Gordon academy and Tel Chai eve [*Tel Chai, in the Galilee, is one of the earliest settlements in Israel. It became a symbol of the struggle following a fire fight with Arabs, in which Yosef Trumpeldor and 17 other settlers died*]. After every meeting we sang the *Poalei Zion* [Workers of Zion] oath and *Hatikva*. We learned pioneer songs and dances. We would dance the Horah with great enthusiasm until midnight. These were great celebrations. Sometimes we would have debates with the Bund [anti-Zionist group] and win them.

[See PHOTO-A18 at the end of Section A]

We organized a drama troupe under the direction of Nechemia Ehrlich. After he emigrated to Argentina, the direction was passed to Yaacov Rosenberg (my brother-in-law, now in Israel). We produced several plays, such as King Lear, The Kreizer Sonata, The Sale of Joseph and others.

We were totally devoted to our activities. In the summers we camped at Dr. Zochatsky's forest and studied the history of Zionism. Sometimes *sheigetzs* (that's how we called the Polish kids) came near. We would chase them away with rocks and sticks. We were in contact with the Pioneer center in Warsaw to increase action for the Jewish National Fund [*which bought land in Palestine*]. We brought Mr. Fishel from the JNF center to talk about the topic "JNF and Its Role in the Future".

*

We helped guest Zionists who traveled through our town with food, lodging and funds. There were many of them because Demblin had a central rail station. Often pioneers would come from their training in agricultural and settlement skills to home to prepare for *aliyah* [going to live in Israel]. They often had little means to continue the trip and we would help.

Many pioneers from that time who were guests at our home are in Israel now, working as *Histadrut* (Labor Federation officials and directors of various institutions). That's how we established an exemplary movement and sent youth for training and for settlement in Eretz Israel. The first pioneer that we sent to Israel was Menachem Rechtman, a boy from a poor family. We took him out of his home, sent him to training and then to Israel. He married there and lives with his family in Israel to this date. This made a great impression in town and brought us other youngsters. That's how we increased our numbers.

Then came the division. Some of our youth tended to the right and founded *Hashomer Haleumi* [the National Guard]. They rented a room by the bridge, and we had two pioneer movements in Demblin: *Gamina* (by the community house) and *Brick* (by the bridge). The friction between us Zionists and Brick increased. They demanded some of our property, especially the nice desk that we had. All to no avail. Some of the Brick tended even more to the right and then founded *Brit Hayil* (Revisionist) [Vladimir Jabotinski's movement]. That's how we acquired a rainbow of youth movements in Demblin.

*

We sent many members to Israel. In 1932, we had a farewell party for my own aliyah to Israel at our home. Guests from all Zionist movements came to bid me farewell. We drank and sang and were elated. Suddenly, however, the extreme leftist youth began to hurl stones at the windows. When I stood up to answer the greetings, I said, among other things, that I am going to help build the country and not only for the pioneers, but also for those who are throwing stones at us, and there may be a time when they will need our help.

This was fulfilled much faster than I expected. After the party we all walked with my family to the train station, where we departed. The pioneers sang Hatikva, while my mother and the family wept bitterly.

HASIDIC, ZIONIST AND COMMUNIST

BY LAIBEL BUCKSPAN

In the 1920's of this century, the Jewish adult population of Demblin-Modzjitz, was divided, in the political-ideological sense, into three camps: Hasidic, Zionist and Communist. As for the first group, they gathered in the synagogue, the study house and in little prayer houses. The professional unions [workers' unions] were the venue for the left leaning workers. The venues of the pioneer center were where the Zionists gathered, later on the Hashomer Haleumi, and Brit-Hayil - the forges where the consciousness and activity of the Zionist youth in the town were beaten out and tempered.

ליגה למען ארץ-ישראל העובדת בפולין
פארבאנד פארן ארבעטנדן א"י אין פוילן

№

כרטיס-חבר
מיטגלידס-קארטע

יום: 2/1 1931
דאטע: דעמבער
עיר:
שטאט:
שם ומשפחה:
נאמען און פאמיליע:
המס החדשי: 30 גר.
דער חודש-אפצאל:
נחנס עליגה-יחיד: 1930
בעהערט גיט פארבאנד זייט:
חתימה: אונטערשריפט:
הועד המקומי:
צענטראל-קאמיטעט:
הועד המקומי:
ארטיקער קאמיטעט:

כרטיס-חבר של הליגה
למען א"י העובדת בפולין
מיטגליד-קארטע פון דער
ליגע פארן ארבעטנדיקן
א"י אין פוילן

Ticket-member of the league for the sake of the workers in Poland
Arye Buckspan dated January 1, 1931
[Page 139 in YIDDISH-HEBREW Book]

THE MODZJITZER DYNASTY

The religious Jews were for the major part either Guerrer or Modzjitzer Hasidim. Or, they were people who hung around the courtyards of other Rabbis. While the Hasidim prayed and studied in their little prayer houses, others prayed to God in the big synagogue and in the separate room there, where middle class Jews and crafts people and porters and wagon drivers and others would pray. There was another separate house of prayer which was called the Zionist prayer house.

Behind the big synagogue, the bath house was found. This was known as the kingdom of "Mendel F.". The Guerr Hasidim distinguished themselves with their very specific and unique customs. Their prayers and celebrations were different from others. They had their separate synagogue which was led under the influence of, and also called by the name of my Godly father, "Moshe Buckspan". In the synagogue, every Sabbath evening, especially during the winter, they would heat up the big oven, they would set out a big barrel of beer, and until midnight they would dance and sing and become very jolly indeed. My brother-in-law, Hershel Weintraub (who was killed along with his wife Freindel, my sister, with their four children), distinguished himself with his beautiful voice, his singing and really elevated the mood of their meals there in the synagogue.

My father was a passionate Guerrer Hasid! He gave me a name, which was the name of a Guerrer saint, "Safat Emet": Yehuda-Arye Leib. Almost on every holiday he traveled to the Rabbi and took me along with him. In 1921, when I was 9 years old, my father died of a heart attack, when on a winter day he went out into the court yard to get wood to warm our apartment. Honored be his memory.

In the city and outside it, the Modzjitzer saint, Rabbi Yisrael Taub, was well known for his songs and melodies. When he would sing on the Sabbath evening or Friday night at prayers, many Jews would gather in his courtyard, right in the middle of the town, and I had tremendous pleasure hearing his heart felt singing and his beautiful melodies. There are many legends and true stories that are told about the Modzjitzer Rabbi's melodies. Like the song about the homeless, or the well known story how while the Rabbi needed to have an operation on his leg, he didn't want any anesthetic and he didn't want to be put to sleep, and he told the doctors to go ahead and cut him open. He wanted to be alone in his world of Torah and songs. Then, it is said, that on that occasion, he created his very famous set of Azkara [I shall remember], which has 36 chapters in it. He died in the year 1921.

His son, Reb Saul Taub, took over and very faithfully served what his father had passed on to him. The Modzjitzer melodies and prayers and singing were broadened and deepened by him. Thousands used to come to hear his wonderful melodies and prayers. Very famous musicologists and musicians would come. He

himself created hundreds of new Modzjitzer melodies, which were sung and appreciated and inspired people there at the Rabbi's court yard, but also poor and simple people all over. His house in Warsaw was the meeting place for Torah scholars and wise men and famous writers who all came to enjoy his music and his prayers. He visited Palestine on a few occasions which made a big impression on the Hasidic as well as the non-Hasidic world. He succeeded before the War to emigrate to America with his family and after several years there, he moved to Israel. He died in 1947 and his body was brought to a burial place in Jerusalem. Honored be his memory.

His son, Reb Shmuel Eliyahu Taub further spins the golden thread of Modzjitz on Dizengoff street in Tel Aviv. He established a religious center for the Modzjitzer Hasidim.

THE PIONEERS

Although in town there were old trusted Zionists, their activity wasn't sufficiently visible to attract the interests and the legions of the youth. Demblin even had a fairly well known Zionist, Avram Shmeltzstein, who was the first with his family to emigrate to Palestine, and even wrote books about the Zionist movement. From the old guard of Zionists I remember such names as: Yosef Gelibter, Berish Zilberglait, Moshe Kamiyan, Shmuel Nachum Luxenburg -- and they operated until the outbreak of the War. There were also a lot of people who were faithful to the idea of Zionist ideology, but their personal circumstances and poverty and other kinds of problems, didn't allow them to participate in that much Zionist activity in the town, they were too preoccupied with other things that they had to do. Until there was a group of young people, who had just gotten out of the yeshiva and study house. They were the first ones to really seriously think about making the journey to Israel, and they understood that would require, most importantly, creating some kind of pioneer organization. They'd have to do it with collective effort. The members of this organization of young pioneers were: Yaacov Rozenberg, Yisrael-Laib Yom-Tov, Benyamin Zilberman, Meir Smit, Ahron Garbovnik, Yichiel Bubis and the writer of these lines. All these people now find themselves in Israel, except for Yichiel Bubis, who died in 1935, on the way to Pulaw, where they had to operate on his intestines. He was very active and did a tremendous amount for the movement. Honored be his memory!

[See PHOTO-A19 at the end of Section A]

The organization got more life when it opened up to a whole group of young women. The sisters Sara and Tova Ointuglich, Chana Rozenberg, Sara Halperin, Pesah Buckspan, Chava Licktenstein, the sisters Tova and Tzirel Weinberg, Rivka YomTov and Tzevyta Obest. The last two died in the ghetto. The sisters Sara and Tova, Chana, Sara, Pesah - are now in Israel. Chava, the sisters Tova and Tzirel,

live now in America. Tzevyta was someone who had a limp when she walked, for that reason the German villains sent her with the first transport out of Demblin to her death. She had a beautiful voice and at her house, the first gatherings and talks among the Pioneers took place.

The group of Pioneers engaged in a lot of activity as they organized question evenings and study sessions to commemorate and study about A. D. Gordon, the Tel Aviv events, the Yarzeit of Herzl, or the flower sale on behalf of the league of workers of Palestine. Until late at night, one danced the Horah, and there were a lot of public readings and games.

There was also a drama circle created among the Pioneers under the direction of Nechemia Ehrlich. After his departure for Argentina, my brother-in-law, Yaacov Rozenberg, now in Israel, took over that task. They performed plays of a very high quality, like King Lear, Kreizer Sonata, the Sale of Joseph, and others.

Summer was a time when we would go into the Zochatsky forest. There we would read and talk about the history of Zionism. Besides the obstructions that we experienced from the left leaning members of the population, we also had to put up with local Polish toughs. They used to like to throw stones at us and start fights and descend upon us with big sticks and do what they could to break up the peaceful, studious sessions that we used to have there.

Our activity was conducted in complete coordination with the Zionist center in Warsaw. Separately, the activity of another group provided us with help. The chairman of one of these groups, F. Popovsky, even visited Demblin and gave talks about the creation of a National Fund.

The activities and achievements of our youth organization began to produce results in the form of aliya. People started going to Palestine. The first one who had the honor of receiving a travel certificate was Menachem Rechtman. He came from a poor family and the movement helped him to make aliya. This event was one of note in the town, and the youth longed to become part of the organization. At this time the influence of the Zionist youth movement became a lot stronger.

THE PEOPLE WHO OPPOSED ALL OF THIS MADE LIFE MISERABLE FOR US

As in every beginning, so the early stages of the Pioneer movement in Demblin was very difficult. The pious parents on one side and the anti-Zionist elements on the other side, put many stones in our path, in the way of the youth organization. Not more than once, an angry father or nervous mother would show up at our headquarters looking for the "Christian Converters", who happened to be their son or daughter. We always in this situation hid the person they were looking for,

until their parents left. But the bigger stress came from the members of the workers' union, which was under communist influence.

During the bloody events in Palestine in 1929 [Arab-Jewish riots], we organized a protest meeting in the town, they painted signs and nailed them together. A great number of people came to the meeting, and among them there were a lot of left wing youth. They had the very clear intention of frustrating the proceedings. They used the word "Shut Up!", which was spoken in Hebrew through Haver Meir Smit, in order to break up the meeting.

I remember an incident when I was late one evening going home from our meeting place where we had a meeting of the secretariat. At the entrance of our house there was a figure there waiting for me. This figure bopped me on the head twice with a board and said, "Here, here's your Zionism, take it!", and ran away. But once, when we were having a meeting, they sealed off the door to our meeting place with barbed wire, so nobody could get out. But the more they tried to foul things up and make life miserable for us, the stronger our will became to continue with our Zionist activity.

We also had heavy political disputes with the Bund. On a special evening with a selection of speakers from both sides, we had it out. Because of the fact that in Demblin there was a train hub for the trains in the district, many Pioneers who were already traveling home from Palestine or going there would stay in the town and would need help. We used to take care of such brethren as they were passing through. We'd give them something to eat, find them lodging for the night, or get a ticket together for them on the train, so they could continue on, because they were often without any means. In that regard I remember just such an incident, a pioneer from a distant town showed up once at our meeting house. But before that our local adversaries had given him, when he'd asked for our address, a whore house.

OTHER ZIONIST ORGANIZATIONS

In Demblin there was also established there the "Hahomer Haleumi" [The National Guard]. Since the meeting place was not very far from the bridge, we decided to call the new organization "Brick". In order not to be confused with the other organization whose meeting house was near the town hall they simply called that one "Gamina" [town hall]. In Demblin the youth organizations like "Brick" and "Gamina", were better known than the "Halutz" [Pioneers] and "Hashomer Haleumi".

[See PHOTO-A20 at the end of Section A]

To the founders of "Hashomer Haleumi", among them were some individuals from the Pioneers, and therefore there began kind of a dispute between them about how to divide up their possessions. One guy was going to get this very beautiful table. After awhile a group from "Hashomer" left that group and decided to form by themselves a more right wing Zionist group, "Brit Hayil" [Vladimir Jabotinski's movement], an organization of veteran soldiers under the influence of the revisionist party.

After another half a year in Borochoy-Kibbutz, in Bendin, I went to Israel in 1932. The farewell celebration at our house had in it a lot of joy and singing and dances of the Pioneers and speeches and while this celebration was going on someone decided to throw some stones through the window. We knew that our opponents would even use an occasion like this, and one that was held in a private house, in order to show their opposition to us. I replied to the people there that I was traveling to Israel to build a land there, not only for Zionists, but also for the people who threw stones through the window. The people who were gathered there at my farewell accompanied me to the train with song.

In the waiting room there we said good-bye with a lot of feeling. I kissed my mother and my family and everybody was crying. When the train started to move all the people who had come with me started to sing, "HaTikvah".

Today we know that in the Jewish State there are many friends from Demblin Zionist organizations, as well as those who were able to be helped by our good works, in very responsible and important matters, and that with their effort, their sweat and blood, they laid a brick in the building of the Jewish State.

THE SEARCHING OF THE YOUTH

BY AVRAHAM GOLDBERG / PARIS

The Jewish youth of Demblin, just like those of other towns and cities of Poland, in the years between the wars, lived in great material need, but at the same time lived in a world of ideas, and constant seeking after ideals which would liberate all of humanity and their own hard pressed people.

I remember well our home, where 10 souls had to quiet their hunger every day. In this situation we were no exception. If I were today to try to give an accurate and responsible estimate with numbers I think that probably 80% of the Jewish population in Demblin lived in poverty or in a constant difficult struggle to make ends meet. In all of the homes one wanted to eat a little bit of bread not only on the Sabbath but also the other six days of the week. But from Sunday until Friday, it wasn't easy to get for the children even a couple of potatoes with a little bit of herring.

In a situation like this, the younger generation knew what it meant to be poor and also to feel discrimination and oppression from the Polish regime. They weren't interested in taking on a religious lifestyle like their parents had wanted for most of their children. It's not any wonder that as soon as they left the heder when they were young, the young people began a search. They wanted to better their lives in an economic sense, they wanted to make their lives more interesting too, in a spiritual sense. Those who had the most minimal ability to do so, wandered away to the bigger cities, if not to other countries altogether. It was quite a happy occasion for those who received some kind of certification to make aliyah to Eretz Israel. But the majority of our youth found their world of ideas in the local chapter of the party, in professional associations, in unions, in sports clubs. In this way Demblin was not very different than other places in Poland which was cooking with very intense and varied social life.

The first of September of 1939, when Hitler hoards attacked Poland, was the beginning of the tragic end of the broad Polish Jewry and more specifically our Jewish Demblin-Modzjitz.

THE FIRST 7-GRADE JEWISH CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL

BY LAIBEL NODELFODIM

After the end of the Polish-Bolshevik war in 1920 (The Miracle of the Vistula), an officer of the Polish army, a Jew, by the name of Joseph, came to Demblin. He hadn't completed his legal education, nevertheless, he was employed as a secretary of the military court, at the Demblin garrison of the new Polish army. Joseph hailed from eastern Galitsia. He was steeped in Polish culture and literature. And his appearance was far from a typically Jewish one. In spite of all this, a warm Jewish heart beat in him. And although he wore the uniform of an officer in the army, which itself denoted snobbism and anti-Semitism, he sought out contact with the Jewish population. He wanted to become closer to the people and always have a relationship with the Jewish community. One felt that his need and longing for Jews and Jewishness was very great. It was said that in spite of his legal work there, he could be counted among the most capable officers in the Demblin garrison. He was bold, very gentlemanly, intelligent, and an extremely capable speaker.

In the course of his work at the military court, he had quite a few opportunities to see the open hatred and anti-Semitism and the way the officers treated Jewish defendants, who were most of the time innocent. The anti-Jewish spirit and general tendency of the civilian and the military powers that were in Poland brought to the defendants seat in the court room many Jewish young people under trumped up suspicions of desertion. It helped very little to explain and respond to the accusations and many of them were sentenced to death. In cases like these all that Joseph could do was to travel from the fortress into town in order to get the Rabbi, Reb Gershon Rabinovitch, who was the son-in-law of the Modzjitzer Rabbi, so he could take a final confession of sins from the person who was condemned.

This Joseph, as soon as he ended his military service, didn't want to remain in the army one day longer than he had to, although in the army they offered him very advantageous conditions if he would stay. He also had no desire to travel into the bigger cities where it was certain that he could have had a formidable career. Instead, he remained in Demblin, and energetically began to work in order to establish a modern school for Jewish children, whose own education had come from heder or just playing around without supervision in the streets and the courtyards.

With ardent enthusiasm, which inspired others, Joseph, with the help of local teachers and those who came from other places, began the first Jewish 7-grade school in Demblin. That was its official name, the 7-Grade Jewish Co-Educational School. The school was situated in the wooden one-story building of Lozer

Rozenman. According to the children's' level of Polish proficiency, they were divided into different classes. Joseph, as well as the other teachers and parents, were determined that the "raw" children should grow up as capable and dedicated students.

I also feel a responsibility and a duty to remember those who served the school with so much devotion. Those who were the assistants of Joseph, Karl Kannaryenfogel, for whom the French term, "*Esprit Universal*" [universal spirit], fit very well. He was a man who was well versed in literature, music and languages; Traub; Miss Foharishes; Klein-Veksler; as well as the famous Jewish writers and translators like Shlome Sheinberg and Shlome Rozenberg. They were our first teachers of Hebrew and at the same time they planted a love in the hearts of the young for Jewish literature and culture.

A separate chapter was the respected and successful children's performances which were always accompanied by recitations and singing, choral declamations and music. The programs on these occasions celebrated one or another Jewish holiday and the affairs were prepared by the teachers.

I remember well the appearance of the school on the inside. Officially, of course, it was a Polish school and it was conducted in the Polish language. But the spirit inside was thoroughly Jewish. On the walls hung pictures of our classic writers, Peretz, Mendele, Sholom-Aleichem, as well as a portrait of Heinrich, although he was lost to the Jewish people, he was nevertheless great in Jewish spirit.

* * *

With longing and sorrow I remember this important institution which was established in a town where tragically my father, mother, sisters and younger brother, uncles, aunts and cousins, were murdered. Honored be their memory!

[See PHOTO-A21 at the end of Section A]

PARTIES AND FIGURES

BY BINYAMIN ZILBERMAN / HOLON

Demblin's children, like all Jewish children in little towns in the Diaspora, studied at *heders* [schools] with *melamdim* [teachers]. More than being a place of study, the heder was like a prison for the young children. Not willingly and without much enthusiasm did the children study there, and many times they escaped the teacher's aide on the way to the heder in the morning. The little kid would have to sit all day on the bench in the heder, without saying a word, except for the few minutes in which he studied the aleph-beth. If the child failed to stay quiet and uttered just one word from his mouth, he would be punished with the whip of the teacher's *kanchik*. The *kanchik* was a whip made of long leather straps tied to a wooden handle.

No wonder then that children tried to escape. If one did flee, the teacher and his helper ran after him and all the kids would have fun. The longer the chase, the merrier the kids became. This happened everyday. A child would run away from the helper and the Rabbi and his aide would leave the heder for a long time until the "victim" was captured. The children would have mixed feelings towards their captive friend; they would feel both sorrow and satisfaction. Sorrow, for what? Because the Rabbi returned too early from his hunt. Satisfaction? Because now the Rabbi would arrange a "packle" . He would put the child in the corner, pull down the child's pants, put his hat on a broomstick, which he would place in the child's hands, and force him to stand like that, humiliated, for a long hour, until he swore that he would never again try to run away from the helper. Even though the victim was their friend, and the following day one of them might be the target, the other children would feel glee for his sorrow. Because kids know how to be cruel when their friend is in pain.

The teacher would not be content with the kid's name; they would give him a name of their own, which according to these educators, reflected the child's personality. When it was a kid's turn to read his verse, the teacher would address him with his name and nickname. For example, Binyamin-Morde, Leibel-Balltz, Meir Pitterl, Avraham-Kishke, Yackle-Ponye, Yankle-Hoyzen-Kacker, etc., etc. A childhood's nickname would stay with him for the rest of his life.

When the child reached the stage of reading the *Chumash* [the five books of the Torah], his parents would make a large festive dinner on the Sabbath, to which the child's friends and teacher would be invited. The child, being the star, would read a speech. After that he would read *parshat hashavu'a* [chapter of the week, from the Chumash] with his feeble, frightened voice. The parents would be elated, imagining him sitting one day on the rabbinic throne. In their imagination they saw the budding of a genius!

Now the *chumash yengle* [youngster] would be transferred to Leibel Wattenmacher's heder. Reb Leibel was a Cohen, and Cohanim, as we all know, are quick tempered. So was Reb Leibel. When Reb Leibel watched one of the kids with his thick, black eyebrowed eyes, the kid would feel terror throughout his body. If the teacher became angry, he would slap the child on the cheek with such intensity that the child would see stars. We therefore took pains not to infuriate him, and to study our chapters well with *Rashi* [interpretation of the Torah, required reading for kids in heder]. On the Sabbath, Father would have *nachass* [feel content], seeing that Reb Leibel did his job, and the teacher's salary would be raised.

The demands of the teacher Aaron Karver, however, were not as stringent. He did not require much from his pupils and therefore did not make their lives difficult. He only asked that they know by heart some *Tanach* [Bible] and *Tehilim* [Psalms]. He would point to the chapters which we had to learn, leave us alone and go to help his wife Dinah'le in her store, pickling cucumbers. Dinah'le had a reputation as an expert pickler. Nevertheless the cucumbers did not hurt his job since he knew how to teach incantation and to chant the Torah. Which father would not want his son to read the Torah? But in return for this, Reb Aaron demanded, and received, special fees.

The pickling and his wife's shop were not the only interruptions for the studies in the heder; the call "*heisse bubelach*" from outside would remove the children from the ancient Biblical world. Who could ignore the smell of fresh baked goods? The *bubelach* and the warm fresh bagels, baked daily in the winter and summer, tasted like paradise. Therefore, when the seller's voice was heard outside, the heder would empty in an instant and all the kids would jump on him like cats on cream. To this day I miss their taste, even though they were not made of fine flower but of rough rye and were fried in oil.

The transition from the heder to Melamed Sanna's study was a profound experience for all the children. Sanna taught Talmud to the older kids. Sanna's teaching method was based on persuasion and addressing the boy's conscience. The kanchik was of no use here; a misbehaving boy would be criticized in front of the class. Sanna's words, however, were often convincing for just a little while. In the winter, when the boys returned home from the heder in the dark, they all had lights made of tin or paper. Such light was sufficient as long as the weather was good and no wind was blowing. The wind would blow the candle out and you had to walk in deep mud all the way home. On nights of a full moon in the winter, when the snow was glowing, you didn't need the light.

We enjoyed very much winter's early evenings, dusk, after the Rabbi had left for the evening service in the synagogue. He would leave us alone, and we used the free hour for skating on ice and snow and on the frozen river. Is there a greater joy than skating on a frozen river? For a while we forgot about Talmud, the Rabbi and his heder, and we would skate until our faces became red and we'd be out of breath. But the Rabbi did not forget us. He would come to our skating place and try to catch us.

His efforts would fail. He would hardly guess where we were, and off we'd go through narrow alleys. But when the Rabbi returned to the heder, we would all be sitting there, as if we never left our seats. This would be repeated every evening. He would go to pray and we would go skating. He would ask his wife to keep an eye on us, but we could easily buy her by feeding her geese, which she raised for Passover. Furthermore, she had enough trouble as it was.

But even the studies at Sanna's reached their end; the boys grew bigger and the heder became too small for them. They continued their studies at yeshiva, independently. Others chose the "marketplace of life", leaving the Talmud and the studies altogether behind them. One of the more respected trades then was making shoe heels. The first to do that in town was the late Leibel Deitcher. In time he had many competitors, including my late brother Chaim, who lost much money in the trade. Leibel was not very happy to hire apprentice boys to his workshop, because learning the trade included damaging much merchandise. Therefore the apprentices worked for him for a long time without pay. Leibel's son, the late Mordechai, was a study friend of mine in the synagogue. His daughter Chaya was a member of Demblin's pioneer movement. All of them perished in the Holocaust. May their memory be blessed.

BEIT HAMIDRASH

In the long winter evenings the synagogue would fill with many people; the place would be packed at the evening service. In truth, not all prayed in solemn silence. Many came to chat, to meet friends and to exchange gossip and opinions on worldly issues.

People concentrated around the two furnaces, which Schmerl the custodian had lit. Everybody wanted to warm up near them. The rule was, first come, first served. They would dry their coats, which became wet with snow, and their shoes, which often had holes. Everybody wanted to be as near to the heat source as possible. Schmerl would work hard to add fuel to the fire. If you moved from your place for a second, your friend would take your place. Therefore, you had to stand there and guard your place. Furthermore, from here, the Demblin furnace, all the news traveled. Who would want to leave his cozy place by the furnace? Towards dinner-time the synagogue would start to empty, unless a speaker was to deliver a speech. After, all left to their homes, only the "beit-midrashniks" would stay there, continuing their study. Then the tradesmen would come, wanting to absorb some spirituality, some Torah after a day filled with trivialities, worries and the constant struggle to make ends meet. They sat near Leibish Gershons, listened to his words and studied a page of Mishna.

At Chanukah, the synagogue would be overtaken by the children, of heder age and older. They would climb on the tables and benches so they could see Shmuel, the

hazzan [conductor of the service], lighting the Chanukah candles by the southern window of the synagogue. With great difficulty, the man would make his way to the windows, while the children chanted in choir: "He's walking, he's walking, he's walking; he's stepping, he's stepping, he's stepping; he's lighting, he's lighting, he's lighting." By the time he reached the window, the candle would be out. Then Shmuel would go again and light the candle, and again, on his way to the window, the flame would be out. So it went several times. The prayers that he would say when lighting the candles would also be lost in the din of the children.

Winter and summer passed, and it became time for the *slichot* nights [*the nights of Elul, the last month in the Jewish year, just before the High Holidays, are days of atonement, in which Jews ask for forgiveness*]. Walking with my father to the synagogue in the middle of the night for "slichot" was a profound experience for all kids. The custodians Ahron and Schmerl would walk in the darkness in the town's alleys, knocking on the shutters and calling out, "*In shihl arien*", "*steit oif zu slichot*" They created a mysterious feeling, especially for the kids. When they arrived at the synagogue, they found many people already there -- those who did not wait for the custodians. They already had tea, or tea with milk, which Schmerl had prepared. That was one of many jobs he had, although the man was always destitute.

With the slichot prayers, a special air hung over the town. The holy days arrived; who would not be moved? Who would not look to the heavens for forgiveness, for the Creator to send him good wages, health and good life, for him, his family and the whole House of Israel? All prayer houses were filled with prayer. Beit hamidrash, the stiebelech, *minyanim* [prayer quorums of ten] of tradesmen and merchants -- all were filled with praying men. This was high time for the Cantors.

Especially in demand were Mathis-Chaim Ahrons and his sons, Beigleman, the late David Wasserman and other Cantors who were well reputed in Demblin and the neighboring towns. Many of "our" Cantors were snatched by others, but even then Demblin was not left without hazzanim and Cantors. The Midzhiz family was an affluent source of Cantors who had good voices and inspiration. The blower of the shofar [ram's horn] was Mendle-Motle, whose blasts confused the prosecuting Satan. But even Mendle-Motle could not prevent the terrible decree that was issued against the Demblin Jewish community.

Furthermore, Mendle-Motle did not earn his living waging war on Satan with the blowing of the shofar. His business was selling dairy products: cheese, milk, butter, etc. His products excelled in their freshness and taste, and therefore he had many faithful clients.

PURIM

The winter passed and spring was coming reluctantly to town. While the winter was refusing to leave, Purim would squeeze itself between rain and shine and fill the street

and the homes. Although Purim is not a real holiday, as fever is not an illness, festivities were many. The thawing snow, the mud in front of the house, the uninvited rain, they do not prevent the little ones and the grownups from being merry. The noise from the children's rattles filled the town's air, and the intense activity of *mishloach manot* [the customary exchange of sweets and fruit between families] meant that Purim was being celebrated in full force. All carried plates or baskets covered with napkins against the "evil eye"...or maybe just so their contents would stay covered, for some of these contained a quarter of an orange, a single fig or no more than five candies. But "reality" did not mean much; what's on the plate is the main thing: a mitzvah. Purim is a good day for all Jews, but especially for the young boys, who are the messengers of mishloach manot. When they run into each other on the street, one looks at the plate of another to see what he is carrying to the town's rich man. Then all know that the rich received in Purim half an orange, a lemon and some candy! No secrets in town, even under napkins!

But as we know, Purim lasts only one day, and by the time you enjoy it, it's gone. It makes way for a real festival, a big festival, Passover, the Holiday of Liberty. Passover is also the holiday of spring, which means the end of winter, ice and snow. The heavy coats have already been stowed in the closets. The heaters were also removed, and so were the double windows and the straw from the top of the mattresses, on which the people slept all winter long. Now the whole house is being renewed! First, the walls are whitewashed, and a door, a window or a shutter are repaired. Everything is taken out to be aired in the yard, and that includes clothes, books, furniture, utensils. They will all get fresh air for a day or two, or a week, after the suffocating winter months. After the house has been whitewashed, cleaned and repaired, the baking of matzoth may proceed. Preparations for this work are an interesting, suspense-filled story. Labor, sweat and responsibility are great, but their reward are mitzvah and satisfaction, because the matzoth would be super kosher. Passover eve was filled with lights and happiness that cannot be described. The second night was also celebrated according to the *halakha* [Jewish law], but it lacked the suspense and splendor of the first night. In the first seder all the expectations were invested, all the feelings of a festival and elation, while the second night was just for doing the mitzvah. The Passover weekdays also had a taste and purpose, because they were the best days for family visits, matchmaking and meetings between a young man and a virgin. In Passover days the town was filled with visiting guests from neighboring towns, relatives, friends and acquaintances, but mostly by matchmakers who came to praise this young man or that virgin.

This is the place to note the great compassion of the Jewish townspeople for the Jewish soldiers stationed at Fort Demblin. The community wanted them to feel festive and to give them a warm, kosher home atmosphere. My cousin Yankle-Yosks Zilberman excelled in this work. He worked much in preparing a kosher kitchen for the Jewish soldiers and spared no time and effort to make Passover a pleasant time for them. And not just for soldiers. He gave money confidentially to every poor person; one would receive a bag of coals for winter, another, money for wheat, and

another, who had lost his money in business, would receive a loan. He did not speak much about his deeds; everything he did was away from the public's eye. But everybody recognized his benevolence. He established the "third meal" in the synagogue and paid its expense. All were grateful for his good heart and philanthropy. Even when he emigrated to Brazil, he kept on his charitable work. He established there a tradition of the third meal and kept his Demblin ways. His daughter, Tova, who was active in the Zionist Federation and the Halutz, died after an illness in Brazil.

May her soul be among the living.

MENDLE DER HEITZER

I must mention Mendle Der Heitzer, may his memory be blessed, to do justice to the man. He was the furnace operator for the *mikve* [the ritual bath]. The mikve was an important establishment for every town with a Jewish population. What kind of a Jew welcomes the Sabbath without first dipping in the mikve? Mendle took care to heat the mikve in the summer as well, because Jews used it also during weekdays. The heat, steam and the warm water created tranquillity, and visitors imagined they were in far away, pleasant places. Often Mendle poured an extra scoop of boiling water, and the steam would engulf the naked, perspiring bodies, and all would say in unison: "*Ay, ay ay, Mendle nach a scheppele!*" Mendle was a good-hearted Jew, and he would pour another bucket and another. "Let the Jews enjoy themselves," he probably said in his heart, watching people whipping each other as a massage in the style of a Jewish mikve in a Jewish town. The pleasure did not cost much. There were those who inquired how much did a pretty, modest bride pay for her pre-wedding dip, but Mendle would not tell professional secrets in public.

YITZHAK VARSHEVER, zal [his memory be blessed]

[See PHOTO-A22 at the end of Section A]

Yitzhakle Varshever did not wait until Mendle heated the mikve. Every morning, winter or summer, Yitzhakle would bathe in cold water. He was innocent, and a scholar, but very lazy. He studied Torah day and night, and some thought he was one of the *lamed-vav tsaddikim* [the thirty-seven unknown righteous men]. He was detached from worldly life, did not even know the value of money, and also did not want to know. Except for the Gemarah and his talith and teffilin [prayer shawl and phylacteries], he cared for nothing. Only at noon would he go to the market to replace his wife at the vegetable stand, so she would go home to prepare a meal. It is hard to say that Yitzhakle did a good job. He would open his Gemarah between the vegetable boxes and sink again into the world of Talmud. The goats did not bother him, and he did not bother them. They sampled vegetables from every box. They

probably liked the produce, for they feasted on them undisturbed. How could Yitzhakle not sympathize with a small or large animal? He was not the one to interrupt the meal of such poor creatures. His wife's neighbors did not agree; had they not taken the initiative and cared for his wife's livelihood and Yitzhakle's bread, the goats would have eaten away her business.

Anyway, Yitzhakle would receive his daily portion of insults from his wife even before he had his warm soup. But Yitzhakle was not one who would be upset by a woman's words! He blessed God everyday for not being created a woman. Their roles were clear. She would not study Gemarah in the synagogue, and he would not sell vegetables in the market. While his wife went to the market in the morning, he would go to the mikve, just like Dr. Zochatzky, the gentile, who also bathed daily, in the river. Every morning, summer or winter, Zochatzky took his ax, went to the river, broke a hole in the ice and bathed.

Dr. Zochatzky was a gentile, but had a rare, benevolent soul. If a poor Jew became ill, he would visit him for free, and even gave him medicine without charge, and not only that, he would give him some money to buy a chicken. For wealthier patients, he charged only for the first visit. He was a benevolent, pure soul, whose likes are so few in this evil world.

REB NATAN KAMINSKY

Reb Natan Kaminsky was a religious Jew with a nice beard and good presence. He was a respected landlord and owned a large bakery. He also had a retail shop, but his main source of income was supplying bread to the Polish army that was based in Demblin. His hand was wide open, and he supported every pauper. The Kozjnitiz shtieble, in which he prayed, always awaited him; the men would not start the service before his arrival. All received him with honor, thanking him for his good deeds to individuals and to the shtieble. The Rabbi of Kozjnitiz, when visiting town, would stay at his home, and this is where he did the table [*communal meal for Hasidim*]. Many Hasidim would gather at Reb Nissan's home, and the place was too small to contain them all. They came to hear the Rabbi playing the violin, which was his hobby. His three most avid fans were three young men from Warsaw: Chonaleh, Yonaleh and Mendeleh. Their livelihood with the Rabbi was greater than in their home city. After every visit, the Rabbi would give them a large tip and therefore they visited him every holiday. These yeshiva boys were smart. They entertained the Rabbi and his followers, because the Rabbi did not say as many profound Torah interpretations as his colleagues. Here the young men would forget their wives and children in Warsaw, tell jokes and make fun. Once, as a skit, the three arranged a "trial". Mendeleh was the defendant, and Yonaleh and Chonaleh were the judges. The defendant was placed on the table for all to see and hear. He would answer the judges' questions with wit and humor, and the whole audience would enjoy it. But he did not know how to honor the place, which was the synagogue, in which one is not supposed to

say vulgarities. When asked what work did his wife do, his answer was beyond what a synagogue can bear. There were many protests and a great disruption. The trial was stopped, and since then the table was moved to Reb Nissan Kaminsky's home.

There were many large families in Demblin, connected in family ties to one another. One was the Kalekotch family, which made up a large part of the town's residents. The head of the family, Reb Avraham, his sons and grandchildren, were married with many other families. No one dared say any bad things about them as was the custom in Jewish towns. They had several sources of income, and some were quite wealthy. Many members of this family perished in the Holocaust. May their memory be blessed.

The sons of Chaim-Ahrons -- Yossle, Mathis, Yisrael and the others -- were decent Jews and prominent landlords. They were merchants, and their material status was quite good. They also were active in the community's public life. Mathis was the chairman of the Burial Society, and everyone who came in contact with him knew that he was honest and decent. All treated him with respect. The other sons also were publicly active, in right-wing and also left-wing, parties, and nevertheless kept their religious ways. Mathis would conduct the service between the High Holidays, his sons singing around him as a choir. His good voice and the sons' singing attracted many to the services.

Leibush Gershons was a Jew respected by his acquaintances. He was modest and studied Mishnah with the trades people. He was active in the burial society and other religious societies. May his memory be blessed.

Reb Avraham Pitchatz, *Der Latte Schneider*, was a patch tailor who sometimes sewed new clothes. He was quite poor, but content. Before work he went to the synagogue, and after the service he stayed to read Psalms. Only then he would go to work, satisfied. On Sabbath eve he studied *parashat hashavua* with his trade people friends, as he knew how to interpret the difficult parts. All listened to him intently and joyfully. All wondered how this *patcher* had such a talent for speaking and teaching. As said earlier, there were better tailors in Demblin, but this man was talented with inspiration and natural intelligence. May his memory be blessed.

Yisraelk Glazer was what his name means: a glazer. But he had a hard time making ends meet for him and his wife -- he had no children. A minyan of friends, Kozjnitz Hasidim, held their prayer services at his home, and he studied *parashat hashavua* with them on the Sabbath. He served them hot tea and kiddush wine. He did not complain about his situation, only asked his Rabbi that God grant him Kaddish [*meaning that he would have a male son to read Kaddish on his grave*], but his wish was not fulfilled. May his soul be among the living.

We would be unfair to say that all of Demblin Jews were thoroughly observant. All, however, kept a Jewish lifestyle, some more, some less. On the Sabbath all the

Jewish men were dressed with satin or silk coats; the women also were dressed with their best clothes and jewelry, which they inherited from their mothers and grandmothers. Sabbath was a day of holiness and inspiration. No such day exists with other nations and cultures. Sabbath would begin at noon on Friday, when the town's landscape changed and an air of holiness descended over the streets, the squares and the houses. The shtiebelach would fill with praying Jews, and they were used not only for prayer. In the shtiebelach, before, during and after the service, the participants talked and exchanged their views on many worldly affairs.

When a Jew returned to his home, he came to a table that was set with Sabbath delicacies. A Jewish woman knew what Sabbath meant and how to create a festive atmosphere. The house would be clean for the holy day. The foods -- gefilte fish, cholent and kogel and kishke, baked goods, meat and sweet challah -- had the taste of paradise. But we will be unfair to the women of Israel if we confined their contribution to the food alone. Demblin's women were active in public life just as their husbands, and participated in the activities of many institutions, such as *bikkur cholim* [visiting the ill], the burial society and especially in *hachnassat kalah* [reception of the bride]. This one was a great mitzvah! A poor young woman who reached marriage age would be helped, as a duty, by the entire public. The women knew their roles. They took care to provide her with everything that she lacked, and when she was finally under the *chuppah* [canopy], there was no end to their satisfaction and happiness for bringing her to this time. The women would come in their best dresses and jewels, their heads covered with shiny hats decorated with flowers, and even the thin grandmother would be pretty; even she remembered that she was a woman.

But let us not exaggerate. Life in the town was not all a Sabbath of rest and tranquillity. Many knew poverty, destitution and hardships. The common people -- tradesmen, wagon drivers, porters, wood choppers and water carriers -- struggled hard to make ends meet. Nevertheless they kept their humanity, did mitzvahs, studied at the synagogue, and made every effort to educate their sons and instill in them with as much Jewish culture as they could afford. They also knew the importance of mutual assistance, and despite their hardships, they provided help to each other in times of trouble.

FOUNDING THE ZIONIST FEDERATION

The Demblin Zionist Federation grew out of the synagogue, which produced scholars and founders of the Jewish Workers trade union. Even the communist activists in Demblin had their roots in the synagogue. The old, torn Gemorah books gave them their first lesson in socialism. As said earlier, the synagogue also produced the Zionists of Demblin.

Not all students studied, for heavens' sake. Many did so in deference to their fathers or regarded the yeshiva as a respectable step in their future careers; namely, they

estimated that study in beit hamidrash would help them find a rich, respectable wife. Their hopes were not always fulfilled, but they did not forget their studies.

One evening, as I was sitting in yeshiva with the Gemorah opened in front of me, I noticed that the older students would go to a box that was filled with old, torn Gemorah books. I became curious. It turned out that this was their hiding place for *treife* [non-kosher] newspapers and periodicals. But my curiosity cost me some beating, as some of them were physically very strong. They caught me and performed "mortgage" on me; namely, they pulled down my pants and slapped me each as much as they could. I lost much of my curiosity after that treatment.

[See PHOTO-A23 at the end of Section A]

These boys were reading Zionist newspapers behind the furnace, thinking they could not be seen there. The supplier of the papers was Yitzhak Schorr Hanskel, of a Radom family that settled among us. The head of the family did not find a job in Demblin, and therefore he traveled far away to teach Jewish children. He returned home only for Sabbath, and therefore his sons grew up without discipline and orderly education, their mother being unable to control them. Yitzhak Schorr Hanskel, especially, grew up totally independent. He would appear in beit hamidrash every morning with the *Zionist Heint*. His appearance always provoked arguments which resulted in his being sent home from beit hamidrash. Our boy, however, was not too upset. The following day, he would again come with his *Zionist Heint* and provoke more arguments. Slowly, the boys began to listen to him, and eventually opened their eyes to the reality in which they were living. He influenced many to leave the parochial education and go out into the world. They opened their eyes and realized that it was a beautiful world indeed. The Gemorah could no longer satisfy them. The new lifestyle, the sight of young men and women walking arm in arm in the town's streets, also had its influence. But this is not what revolutionized their lives; it was the vacuum they felt after leaving beit hamidrash. Having left the Gemorah behind, what awaited them? What would become of them? Work was hard to find in a small town like Demblin; their chances of succeeding there were nil. Many left for the big city, Warsaw. In the first days, they went to their towns people who had settled there, but in the end they found the address of the Pioneer Society on Zamenhoff Street. On the Sabbath they went to the nearby training site in Grochov, where they heard lectures on Eretz Israel and the Zionist Movement. The seed finally began to bud.

The boys would return to their homes in the town for the holidays. On Shevu'ot of the year 1930, some of us assembled in Dr. Zochatsky's forest. We were Meir Sammet, Arye Buckshpan, Avraham Schilinger, Yankle Rosenberg, Yankle Perlstein (Reiker), Aaron Garbovnik, Moshe Iglitzky and myself, and some other young men, led by Shalom Puterflam. There we declared the founding of the Zionist Federation... Although we were influenced by the ideas of the Pioneers, we established a general Zionist federation, in order to receive assistance from local veteran Zionists such as

Yosef Gilibter, Yaacov Geigenboim, Moshe Kamin, Leibel Luxenburg, Berrish Silbergleit, Yonah Burashtin and others. This group used to meet at the soda shop of Yosef Gilibter to discuss issues of the Zionist movement. Other activity was not yet felt in Demblin. Only with our organizing did the Zionist activity begin. Our first club was in a small room in the home of Leibke Kanioch. Our first activity was to distribute JNF coin boxes, and we had immediate success. Not only Zionists responded, but also common people, who contributed nicely. If the box was empty at collection time, they gave their monthly contribution on the spot. Moshe Kamin's box was always the fullest, and for that he was cited by the central bureau in Warsaw. The activity extended as time passed. We invited speakers from Warsaw, but the objectors tried to blow up the meetings by throwing stones in to the hall or by interrupting the speeches with shouts. We were not intimidated and even intensified our activities. In time we had more members, including ultra-orthodox. We rented a bigger hall and had more space for recreational activities, such as dancing, singing, but mostly for meetings and conversations. We often went outdoors and hiked in the forests and fields. The religious Jews could not bear our activities, and our influence on the youth, and tried to prevent their sons and daughters from joining us. Could that be possible, that boys and girls would dance together, entertain each other and even sing? Some shtiebelach joined together to stop the "carelessness"! The Hasidim sat for seven days and seven nights until they reached a proposal: if a young Jewish woman appeared in short sleeves, they would stain her with black tar! S.N. took upon himself to stand guard for their modesty, and even committed himself to treating seven girls at once! The man was muscular and was not very gentle, but when he had to do his duty, he lost heart. Demblin's young Jewish women continued to wear short dresses and sleeves! Although it cannot be considered a convincing triumph for the pioneer movement of Demblin, it marked the liberation of the youth from traditional ways of life that had become obsolete. A new generation had risen and wanted to make a new way for itself, because their parents' way had reached a dead end.

[See PHOTO-A24 at the end of Section A]

One day a messenger arrived in Demblin from Eretz Israel. He was the brother of the chief Rabbi of Israel then, Rabbi Cook, may his righteous memory be blessed. He spoke in a rally. His speech was filled with the love of Eretz Yisrael. He urged his listeners to make aliya to Eretz Yisrael, since settling in the land carried more weight than all other mitzvahs combined. He was asked by an orthodox man: how can he preach to a religious audience to support the Zionist Movement, which was in secular hands, controlled by people who did not observe the mitzvahs. He said that his brother too was asked this question by the ultra-orthodox. And so answered Rabbi Cook: "As it is well known, no one was allowed to enter the Holiest of Holy's [in the Temple], and even the High Priest was allowed there only once a year, on Yom Kippur. But when the place needed repair, entry was granted to trades people, and not necessarily to the High Priest. So is Eretz Yisrael. It is indeed the Holiest of

Holy's, but now is in ruins and must be rebuilt. Therefore, no one should be checked too closely. All are assumed kosher, and everybody who helps in this task is blessed".

The envoy's words left their impression and eased our work. But the extremists of Agudat Yisrael [society of Israel, now a political party] continued to sharply oppose any activity associated with the building of Eretz Yisrael. They and the Rabbi of Guerr continued to incite against us and blocked our way. They regarded every pioneer preparing aliya as a Jew-hater. They did not hesitate to excommunicate people from their communities, as when they prevented my uncle Reb Avraham Shmeltzstein (*Der Purim Soycher*) to enter the shtetle, because of his devotion to the Zionist idea. They did not even hesitate to boycott his shop. But they could not impoverish him, as he had many Christian customers, farmers and railway workers. Reb Avraham Shmeltzstein was a son-in-law of Reb Shimon Silberman, may his memory be blessed (the other was the scholar Itche Pinchas Traler).

Agudat Yisrael continued to incite against the Zionists also during the 1930's. During the election campaign for the Polish parliament, we posted bills recommending our candidates, also in beit hamidrash, but they saw this as rudeness, a foreign invasion of their territory, and tore up the bills. Of course, we tore up their bills. When we again posted bills in beit hamidrash, they tore them up again, desecrating the Sabbath in their "holy war" against us. We did not forgive, and on Sabbath morning we entered beit hamidrash and beat the ones who tore our posters. In this instance the police interfered to enforce peace. But we had objectors also among the trade unionists, who were influenced by the left, the Bund and the Communists. Among them, however, the youngsters were politically alert and intelligent.

We also established a drama troupe. The first play that we staged was "Jewish King Lear", directed by our member Shalom Puterflam. The major roles were played by Binyamin Stemplock and Scheindle Luxenburg, may her memory be blessed.

[See PHOTO-A25 at the end of Section A]

This is the place to tell more about Scheindle Luxenburg. Her father Reb Shmuel Nachum was chairman of the Demblin community and his home was a faithful Zionist home. His son and daughters -- Yechiel, Geniah and Scheindle -- were active in the Zionist youth movements. Scheindle, while still in grammar school, joined Hashomer Haleumi despite the prohibition. Genia left for a training farm near Lodz. Geniah and her mother were saved from the Nazi slaughter, but were murdered in their home, after the war, by Polish murderers. Scheindle, while fleeing the Nazis, perished in tragic circumstances. They did not live to fulfill their dream of life in Eretz Yisrael.

May their memory be blessed!

After the great success of "Jewish King Lear", we produced Shalom Ash's play "Motke the Thief" under the direction of Chemia Ehrlich. The major roles were played

by Yaacov Rosenberg and Binyamin Stamler. But our successes were viewed jealously by the trade unionists. They viewed our success as a danger, attesting to our influence, and tried to prevent the show by all means. They declared a boycott on the shows and tried to prevent the youth and adults from attending. But in vain. We again succeeded and the income was nice. We were encouraged to bring outside groups. Once, when we invited such groups to appear and the bills were already posted throughout the town and the hall was ready to host the show, the trade unionists notified us that they would use force to prevent the audience from attending. And so they did. Before the show they had their people at the doors, not allowing anyone to cross. They waited for us to oppose them by force, and had their muscular men ready. In the last minute we decided to cancel the show. We paid the actors, refunded the tickets and paid for the hall. That was done to avoid a bloody battle and police interference.

Much devoted activity was done for the JNF. We placed the blue-and-white box in every Jewish home and did not miss any opportunity -- family event and holidays -- to raise money for the JNF from the town's Jews. On Tu B'shvat [day of the trees] we sold "fruit of Eretz Yisrael" and the proceeds were all given to the JNF. We also used the good mood of Purim, when Jews were slightly intoxicated, for fund raising.

I remember Purim night of 1931, while I was sitting at my mother's deathbed (she died the following day), I was notified that the trade unionists assaulted a group of boys that raised funds for the JNF and robbed them. Despite the difficult situation at home, as my mother was struggling to live a few more hours, I jumped out to catch the attackers. This time too we avoided asking the police for help. The few pennies that were raised were sacred in our eyes and nothing was dearer than protecting that blue box! When I returned home I was eyed by the people present; how could I leave my dying mother to protect the few pennies for the redemption of the Land of Israel?

The Leftists did not stop at anything to disrupt our festivities and meetings. When we returned from a hike of Lag Ba'omer [thirty-third day of the mourning period from Passover to Shevu'ot in memory of Rabbi Akiva, who inspired the mutiny against the Romans], while dressed in Zionist garb and were singing, the Leftists suddenly attacked us. Many were beaten for no apparent reason. But many resisted the attackers with force. I and my brother Chaim struggled hard against M.P.'s two sons. Thanks to Herschel Koshminer -- near his soda shop the scuffle had begun -- we received just a few blows, but returned them as they deserved.

The work of the Zionists was not easy at that time. We struggled against both the Right and Left, but thanks to the faithfulness and devotion of our members in the town, we overcame our foes and widened our ranks. We had more new members by the day. As said earlier, the community chairman was Shmuel-Nachum Luxemburg, despite the fact that the majority was of Agudat Yisrael members. Reb Shmuel Nachum fought the battle of Zionism in the community and attained many rights for the cause, including a clause in the community's budget which provided financial

assistance for every pioneer that made aliyah. The money was not given to the pioneer but to the Zionist Federation of Demblin. Indeed, this clause was a significant contribution to the activities of the Zionists in Demblin. In those years, the Zionist activity went on intensively and without many severe disruptions. We took pains to infiltrate the ranks of the trade unionists' youth, because their youngsters were mainly good. But we didn't see much success there. Only a few joined us. We decided to establish the Halutz *Hasmalli* [the Left Pioneer] movement, that would tend more to the left. These youths also searched for ways to join the Zionist movement, because they heard that with it, there was a chance to emigrate to Eretz Israel. The atmosphere in the town had become intolerably suffocating. Furthermore, there were letters from those who tried their luck in the Soviet Union. They wrote that they had no money for the return trip home. These messages made the Leftist youth realize that the best way was ours. Indeed, the Working Youth began to see the Pioneers as their organization, the address for their various problems, so much so that the Pioneers had more members than the Zionist Federation. The youth regarded the Pioneers as a socialist movement that promoted labor, established training sites and trained its members for aliyah to Eretz Israel. When the first pioneer from the town, Menachem Rechtman, emigrated to Eretz Israel, the news made their impression on the entire town and increased the Pioneer's influence. Many joined the movement and many of them fulfilled their ambition to emigrate to the Land of Israel.

As the Pioneers expanded with the new members from the left, so grew the Zionist Federation with the Bourgeois youth who were removed from socialist ideas and social revolutions. This youth found its place in the *Hashomer Haleumi* [national guard] movement, which later changed its name to *Hanoar Hatzioni* [the Zionist youth]. The National Guard had many school students, despite the prohibition on school-age youth to join any youth movement. The movement's group leaders tried to explain to educators and school principals that a youth movement is not a political organization but a national Jewish scouts. Indeed, the elementary school teacher Mrs. Steinhammer did not prevent her students from joining the National Guard. In time another movement was established, *Halutz Haklal Tzioni* [the all-Zionist Pioneer], because many wanted to make aliyah. However, without joining the training period, one could not get an aliyah certificate. Therefore, many left for the training sites that were established throughout Poland before the Second World war. Living conditions in those training sites were not easy at all: the labor was non-professional, lodging was the worse, and the food was nearly non-existent. Many failed and returned home, but many had stronger convictions and stayed on until emigrating to Israel. Truthfully, even those who dropped out did not give up the dream of emigrating to Israel. Indeed, many of them were among the country's builders and did their part in building the country!

I and Lippa Stamler also went to the training near Lodz. We worked in the farm of Asher Cohen, a famous industrialist. The work was quite difficult, but we became used to it. After some time we established another training site near Hlanovk, also near Lodz. We worked there in an orphanage that was supervised by the infamous

Romkovski. It should be said however, that the orphans regarded him as their father and so they addressed him. My friend Lippa Stamler returned home a while later and did not make aliya. May his soul be among the living.

We, members of the General Pioneers worked also in Gurah Kalabria, namely the town of Guerr, seat of the Hasidic Rabbi. Their court did not shun our help, despite their sharp objection to Zionism. I still remember the debate between Yitzhak Greenboim, leader of the Polish Zionists, and the Rabbi's son-in-law, Itche Meir Levin, on the path of Zionism. The debate was heated and piercing. But history proved who was right in seeing the future of Polish Jewry. Even in the darkest visions one could not imagine, in his most terrible nightmares, what was in store for the Jews in the coming years since that debate. Today Itche Meir Levin is member of the Knesset of the State of Israel.

After Zeev Zhabotinski left the Zionist Federation and established a Revisionist federation, he was joined by some people, headed by Feible Lindboim. In the beginning, the number of Demblin's revisionists was small, but they increased after the founding of *Brit Hakhayil* [treaty of the soldiers], led by Steinhammer, the teacher's son. The uniforms and the slogans on a Jewish state on both banks of the Jordan river were popular among the Jewish veterans who joined the organization.

Demblin was also home for *Hamizrahi* [the religious Zionists], but they were few. They included Shlomo Stamler, my late brother Chaim, Yodle Stern and a few others. But it had many non-active supporters. They did not have a club of their own and did not conduct any activity; many of the religious would have joined it had there been any activity at all. All were busy trying to make a living. Nevertheless many members of this Zionist movement were devoted to Eretz Yisrael, because they saw their future there.

Reality was more somber by the day. Anti-Semitism was rampant, and there was a boycott: "Don't buy from the Jews," "Jews to Palestine!" Times were tough for Jews and no work was in sight. The Polish opened more and more stores of their own, using government assistance, and those competed against the Jewish establishments. The entire government apparatus was mobilized to demote the Jews from their business position and even from the universities. Income decreased, trade was being lost and the pressure of taxation was immense and merciless. All looked forward to Eretz Israel. But in order to enter the gates of the country one needed a certificate or have capital of a thousand English pounds! No Jew in a Polish town had this immense sum! Fathers, brothers, in-laws, uncles and all the other relatives asked their relatives to send them certificates, but those lucky ones who arrived in Eretz Israel could not help, because they had little. The keys to Eretz Israel were with the government of the British Mandate, and it was not generous. Everyone who had family or acquaintance in Eretz Israel asked him for help! The hazzan Doodle Wasserman asked his townspeople in Israel to help; my brother Chaim and my sister Leah and her husband Yisrael Rechtman asked me to help, but I could not.

Berrish Silbergleit asked his friends in Israel if perhaps they needed match makers in Tel Aviv. He was afraid that he would not be able to survive as a merchant.

Much envy was felt among all towards the few happy ones who could leave Demblin for Israel. Nevertheless, all believed that they could fulfill their dream. In the meantime they joined the Zionist Federation and the other movements.

But they did not realize their dream. Like their brethren in Poland and the Nazi Block during the Second World War, they were destroyed and murdered and did not see the realization of the vision, the establishment of the State of Israel!

Had I known that my cry would be heard, I would have shouted in a voice that would make the world's institutions tremble: Murderers! bloodhounds! What have you done to us! What have you done to the Demblin Jewish community, its Jews, women, old and child. Why did you murder our fathers and mothers! What had our little children done to you!

As long as the sun rises, as long as just one human creature remains on this earth, your memory and the memory of your people will be forever damned!

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY, CULTURAL WORK, PERSONALITIES

BY MOSHE WASSERMAN / TEL AVIV

In my recollections I would like to discuss the youth activity of my dear, beloved and beautiful town. I want to bring out the suffering and pain of Demblin's Jews, workers and menial laborers, the bitter struggle that Demblin Jews had throughout the year to make a living.

It is with trembling that I write these lines. My heart bleeds, the tears run, when one remembers that once upon a time, a lovely blossoming Jewish town lived with warm hearted mothers, fathers, and little children who filled the streets with joy. In my Demblin there was a flowering, strong, conscious youth who wanted to take advantage of culture and knowledge, who struggled and went a long way to carry the burden of new ideas. These were ideas from the broader world which promised a new era to come.

The youth of Demblin, deep in their heart and soul, carried these new ideas of justice. They didn't get scared off by any difficulties which were placed in their paths. With great, youthful ardor they believed that a time would come when hatred would be replaced by love between peoples, when hunger, need and wars would be replaced by friendship among peoples. They carried around these beautiful ideas of national and socialist liberation, with great affection, and in all of the most difficult times. The whole of Demblin youth was like one organism ready to fight back against the attacks of the Endex and other anti-Semitic organizations, who wanted to trample on the rights of the Jewish inhabitants until the blackest clouds spread and a murderous hand with a sharp ax came down over our beautiful and beloved town and exterminated almost all of the Jews of Demblin. All of our families were annihilated and the little handful of survivors will with reverence remember the destroyed Demblin community and their families, and will forever carry great sorrow in their hearts.

IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The year 1914. Like lightening the news traveled through the town that the War had started. Mothers run around ringing their hands because children and husbands are being called to the front and they walk weeping spasmodically over the narrow streets of the town. There was hardly one house that they didn't take away a father or a son.

Suddenly an order arrives that all Jews must get out of town. It was a Sunday. And all Jews evacuated. A horrible hardship prevailed among the Jews of Modzjitz, who were uprooted from their homes and sent wandering without any means of making a living. We longed for our old home, Modzjitz. Or at least

some place to lay our head down. A year later the Austrians took our town. Demblin was unrecognizable. A great section of the town lay in ruins as a result of the retreat of the Russian army. The people too, were hardly recognizable. There was a stamp of wandering and homelessness on their faces. And the old life in which almost the entire population made their living from the Russian soldiers stationed at Ivangorod, was gone.

The Austrian army, by contrast, bought absolutely nothing. Terrible poverty reigned in the town. The young people didn't have any work, and living conditions were truly miserable as a result of the lack of dwellings. Several families were forced to share a single room. In the midst of the greatest desperation, they began to enlist workers to build the bridge over the Vistula. A large number of adult and young Jews went to work on the Vistula bridge, and from that were able to make a little money to survive on. Also smuggling became a means of making a living. As soon as it got dark, Jews would slip out of town loaded with containers of kerosene, as well as with other kinds of goods. The leader of each group was somebody who knew the roads and byways that led to Ryki and he was called the engineer. He had to have very finely tuned senses and be able to sense in the depths of the Ryki forest where the German border police lay in wait, hidden. When he sensed danger, he would steer the whole group onto another path. One of the leaders had a reputation for moving his group around with great success. This was Avram Greenberg, a shoemaker. When the group safely got to the other side of the border, there was waiting for them in Ryki, merchants, and they made their exchanges of merchandise. In this way the smuggling continued during practically the whole Austrian occupation.

In the same epic, cultural activity began in Demblin. The first culture circle opened up where the first library was located as well as the first drama circle. The culture union was located in the house of Itche Handelsman. Almost all of the Demblin youth would make their way there. You could read newspapers, hear lectures by one of our own friends, as well as by speakers who came from Warsaw and there were also question evenings and you could take books home to read them. The first posters began to appear in town which invited the population of Demblin to musical and vocal evenings. These evenings I'll never forget. It was in the middle of summer and there was a big crowd and commotion in Kalman Zucker's courtyard. I went there myself, of course. At the door tickets were sold by Hindela Berentzweig. There was quite a commotion. It didn't take long for all of the tickets to be sold out. A big part of the audience had to go home because they couldn't get in. Darkness fell. The doors of Kalman Zucker's shop opened up and the concert began. In the street you could hear little bits of the song in the streets. One song I remember until today, it's branded in my memory, although I was only 9 years old at the time:

"Great God, we sing songs / and you alone are our help /
Gather us the sheaves, brothers / until the sun goes down..."

I wanted to hear more, but they didn't let the little kids hang around because they were making too much commotion.

A little later I remember, a Sunday morning, a little boy and girl carried collection cans which were inscribed, "For poor children". The same thing repeated itself a second time, this time it was to raise money for the Jewish library. The culture center was very, very popular. It was greatly respected by the youth. You could find books that had been taken out of the library in many, many homes. The first book of my life I opened up and read, it was called, "The Shtetl", by Sholom Asch. My father fiercely criticized my sister, Hannah-Gitel, because of her trayf [he considered the books garbage]. In this realm, in the same way, there were plenty of conflicts between adults and parents and children, the parents feeling the children were going down a very slippery road.

As long as I'm at it, I'll remember and give great tribute and honor to the creator and the founders of the first culture center in Demblin, Yarmeyohu Vanapol, Alter Rubenstein, Laibel Bubis, the Rozenfeld brothers, the Heldman brothers, Shmuel Fang, Chaskel Lozeres' father, Eliya Tzirklevitch, Hindele Berentzweig, David Kestenberg, Nechemiah Erlich, Chana Gitel Wasserman, Rafael Baigelman, Dinah Baigelman, Yankel Bubis, Samson Zyman, the Apelhot brothers and others whose names I can't remember.

With the installation of the culture center, the youth began to conduct themselves with a little bit more freedom. Because, until then, the religious fanaticism had its influence not only on the older Jews but also on the youth. For the first time Jewish girls would show up in pony tails. Boys would exchange their Jewish hats for caps. Every evening when the culture center closed down you could see couples walking together on the Demblin road and conducting heated discussions into late at night. By day, the youth would go in and exchange books, and there were lots and lots of young people who would go in and out of that library.

The town began to normalize and get back to itself and the ruins were swept aside and in the empty lots, modest houses were built and the tradesmen were able to repair their workshops. You could feel a change. Posters announced that the drama circle at the culture center would perform Sholom Asch's "God of Vengeance".

POLAND BECOMES INDEPENDENT

After the installation of the Polish state in 1918, the workers and journeymen and professional labor movements got started again in Demblin. A union of leather and needle workers was founded which began to conduct many activities.

To the founders and activists of the union and to the establishment of the professional and cultural movement in Demblin, many of the previously mentioned

young people belonged and a number of them had come from very religious backgrounds: Motel Botner and Alter Rubenstein; the well-known writer in America, B. Demblin, Binyomen Taitelboim is his real name; my sister Chana-Gitel Wasserman, today in Moscow; Eliya Tzirkelevitch; Yichiel Sharfhartz (killed by the Nazis); David Kestenberg (today in Israel). The first one, Alter Rubenstein, has passed away. All of them, with their knowledge, energy and talent brought a great renewal of life and light to the town. They did a tremendous amount in the whole realm of enlightenment and culture.

The union center began to organize in its ranks the workshops in Demblin on behalf of better living conditions. A strike was carried out on a very broad scope for an 8 hour day and for salary increases.

The employers, of course, didn't want to yield to any of the demands. The strike took on a very stormy character and its scope was so great that even the sons of the employers, the business owners, their children took part in it. It's enough to bring forth as an example the fact that the young Shmuel, son of the master tailor Katskka, was one of the organizers of the strike.

Thanks to the decisive and uncompromising conduct of the workers, all the demands were won.

The needle workers conducted a very bitter struggle which lasted 2 months, but they won. However, the Polish authorities weren't about to grant this victory to the Demblin needle workers. The union was very popular among the needle workers who were proud of their organization and its leaders, but at this time reprisals began against left activists and sympathizers in the professional unions. On a certain evening, just as it was getting dark, the police showed up at the needle workers union and arrested its leader, the chairman.

The carpenter's section of the union, as well, found itself in the same circumstances. The wood worker, Laibel Radovsky, was arrested along with Yisrael Zaltzhendler and other young people. The police accused them of being leaders of the communist party in Demblin. Although no real evidence was produced, there was no documentation for the charges, they were still judged guilty. The chairman Avram Avramovitz was sent to prison for 5 years, Laibel Radovsky and Shmuel Zaltzhendler for 2 years each. The Demblin needle workers, however, were not intimidated and they continued their activity in the street. The brother Mechel Avramovitz, Hersh-Nachum Nachtailer and others made continuing efforts to open the union.

One could feel in town the activity of a certain group of young people who felt that Jewish life in Poland was a dead end. They felt that one had to turn instead towards the ancient home which hadn't been home to the Jewish people for 2,000 years. That's where the youth should be turning their glances and that

should be where they devoted their energy, in that direction. The Demblin airport, which was a source of employment and livelihood for many Polish workers and clerks, didn't allow any Jewish workers from Demblin to be employed there. For a big section of the youth, the thought of wandering away and getting out of town and going into the big, broader world, became very meaningful. Because at home there really wasn't any material sustenance. Many of them affiliated themselves and fell in with the Zionist movement and prepared themselves to travel to the land of their dreams.

THE WOOD WORKERS UNION

In the middle of the 1920's, the carpenters union was a very, very important factor in the whole craft union movement in our town. There wasn't one carpenter who wasn't outside of the union. This section used to set an example and great encouragement for all of the workers in Demblin. The 8 hour work day was very strictly observed. The way work was apportioned was admirable. In the leadership in the carpenter section there were experienced, trusted and very dedicated unionists like Chaim Meir Goldberg (today in Israel), Hershel Nisenboim (in Paris), Yisrael Yom-Tov (in Canada), Shmuel Zaltzhendler (in Paris), Laibel Radovsky (in Israel), Moshe Apelhot (Brazil), Moshe Baigelman, and others.

Each action which the carpentry workers undertook seemed to be successful. It was crowned with success. The carpenter's section was the largest division of the professional union in Demblin. The employers had to take them seriously. When on occasion there was an attempt to take action against the carpenters' union by these employers, they had to give it up very, very quickly, because it was clear that they were trying to push against a solid wall of cement, which was absolutely unbreakable.

In the cultural realm, as well, the carpenters never took a back seat. Many of those who survived remember very well the part that Moshe Apelhot and Moshe Baigelman took in the drama circle. They really elevated the level of the performance with their own contributions and hoped to create great respect for the accomplishments of the drama group.

In this way the carpenters of our town sustained the struggle which Jewish workers conducted in that time. By far the greatest percentage of them were murdered by Nazis.

STRUGGLE WITH ANTI-SEMITISM

The first time that the local Demblin anti-Semites went into action, they sent a group of carriage wagons with Polish drivers. On their hats they wore an insignia which said in big letters, "Polish Wagon". All of the officers who used to ride in a carriage driven by a Jew to the train (most of the wagons were driven by Jewish

drivers), decided when they saw this change that they would only patronize the Polish drivers. This created a condition in which Demblin's Jewish drivers, who in normal circumstances were extremely poor, started to literally die from hunger.

Each Wednesday when the market opened up in town, anti-Semitic hooligans stopped the Jewish tailors and shoemakers from selling their wares. Other groups gathered in front of Jewish stores and wouldn't let the peasants in to buy stuff. True, not all of the peasants followed the advice of these hooligans, but the livelihood of the Jews shrank and poverty was felt much more intensely in the town. It seemed that the Demblin anti-Semites inspired and were given hope and direction by the activities of their neighbors in Germany. The followers of Hitler, ruled the street.

That moment, a spontaneous kind of reaction began in the organizations of Demblin's Jewish youth and workers as well as the membership of the political parties. Every Wednesday when the anti-Semitic hooligans showed up at the stalls in the market and in front of the shops, they'd really get punished. They got it so bad that they'd run. They ran so fast that they forgot to take their hats. A second time when they came back with increased strength, more people, they got beat up so bad that they didn't come back after that to terrorize the Jews of Demblin. That's the way the Demblin Jews wrote a heroic page in the history of the defense of Jewish rights and honor.

[See PHOTO-A26 at the end of Section A]

It should also be remembered on this occasion that a group of Demblin youth, with weapons in their hands, fought against the German occupiers. The leader of the group was the heroic young man Yirschmayel Federbush. Two versions exist of his heroic death. One says that he and his co-fighters were killed in a battle with the Nazis in the Ryki forest, the second version says they were killed in a battle with the A.K.

CULTURE ACTIVITY

The organized Jewish workshops in Demblin together with their professional labor related activities, began to conduct many branches of cultural work. A library and reading hall were organized where the youth was able to take advantage of and enjoy the best work of Jewish and European writers.

To the very, very distinguished and wonderful achievements of the union belongs the drama circle which possessed great and very capable resources and successes and presented plays of classical Yiddish plays as well as a repertoire of plays from other parts of the world. The drama circle was quite well known for the level and scope of its presentations and its reputation extended well beyond the borders of

Demblin. The drama circle gave its guest performances in many other towns and was always received with great enthusiasm.

Among the participants in the drama circle were such people who with more professional training could have easily become really important performers.

Among those who were associated with and performed in the drama circle were such comrades as: Rafael Baigelman and Chemya Erlich (who is in Brazil today); Chana Gitel Wasserman (Moscow); Velvel-Leib Ruder and David Cholevinsky (killed by the Nazis); Efraim Weiss and Moshe Gorfinkel (today in America); Chana Goldberg (today in Paris); and many other comrades and workers whose names I do not remember.

When a large number of activists and people who worked in professional associations emigrated from Demblin into the broader world, the following people kind of took the lead in the activities of the union: Yosef-Note Cholevinsky (chairman of the leather workers section); Avromel Avramowitz (chairman of the needle workers section), who as a result of their activity, their professional labor and social activity, were not very well thought of by the Polish authorities and were sentenced to 5 years in prison from 1928 to 1933. Yosef-Note Cholevinsky was killed, still fighting in the Bialystok ghetto against the Germans, together with his family. Avramel Avramovitch died in Lodz after the War.

Besides those two comrades mentioned above, those who were very active in the union at that time included: Chaim-Meir Goldberg, Hershel Eichenbrenner and the writer of these lines, all of who find themselves today in Israel; and Hershel Nisenboim (today in Paris), Yaacov Fiztenboim (Paris).

The culture work in Demblin was at that time on a very, very high level. Not a Sabbath evening went by when there wasn't some kind of cultural performance or another presented.

The culture commission turned towards the most honored inhabitants of Demblin, for instance to Dr. Yarmeyohu Vanapol, who later was killed by the Germans. He gave a cycle of lectures about anatomy. And for quite a bit of time he was also a member of the drama circle and gave a lot of himself to social work.

The second person was the lawyer Kannaryenfogel (he was also killed by the Germans), and he gave a series of lectures about the cosmos.

There were also question evenings conducted later by Yankel Bubis, who was murdered by the Nazis, a very capable, talented person, who devoted all of his energies to the education of the youth.

During our undertakings, the meeting hall was absolutely jammed because so many wanted to attend. There were a lot of people who couldn't get in and they used to stand outside, behind the doors and windows, to listen to the lectures.

Every holiday our drama circle gave a performance and everybody streamed in to see it, young and old, free thinkers and religious people.

There were also concerts where there were solo performances by Rochtshe Baigelman (today in Brazil). With her majestic, sweet voice she won the sympathy of the whole audience. She used to have to sing many, many encores.

Miriam Shulman as well (who was killed in the camps) inspired the public with her Kolorater-Soprano. One marveled at her God given voice which was able to handle the most complicated melodies like a wonderful song bird.

In this way our culture work went forward until the conflagration of the War, which swallowed up Poland and destroyed our dear home town Demblin with all her population, young and old, big and little, and in this way, our wonderful, flowering youth was destroyed. The life of our dear town which had gone on for many generations and continued to bubble up and produce its own qualities was cut off completely for once and for all.

MIRIAM SHULMAN - MAY SHE REST IN PEACE

Who in Demblin didn't know or hadn't heard of Miriam Shulman. The dark, charming young woman with the fine features. Her dreamy eyes bespoke both a very refined personality and an artist of the highest order. But only the greatest respect came her way when one heard her in concert. It was enough that her name showed up on a poster and the success of the concert was assured. The union took advantage of that fact when there was a lack of money and organized a musical evening from the posters that in big letters shined the name "Miriam Shulman". When the poster went up all of the tickets would be sold out a week before the concert.

She was able to sing the most beautiful compositions with a very light touch and with great feeling of the heart and everybody who was listening to her wanted only one thing, that was, that her majestic song should just go on and on and not stop. She possessed the voice of the highest class, a Kolorater-Soprano, a voice full of feeling and refinement. The movement from a higher octave to a lower one was something she did apparently very effortlessly. Schubert's serenade she sang with so much charm that when asked the question, where did this young woman come from, born in a Hasidic family, how did she come by so much musical skill. Besides that, in Demblin, there wasn't any music school. Nevertheless, she possessed, just like the greatest musical personalities, two superlative points. Those were a beautiful voice and a great musical range.

[See PHOTO-A27 at the end of Section A]

Miriam Shulman never showed any arrogance. She was very unpretentious and simple. Each time when she was asked to give a concert she agreed readily. She was one of the young woman I've written about before who was very conscious, very well known, and very loved in our town. One would never tire throughout a whole evening of listening to her sing and speak.

There was one concert during which Miriam Shulman presented many songs and the audience found itself in the greatest ecstasy. The friend who conducted the evening said, let it be known that our friend Miss Shulman would end the concert with Maurice Rozenfeld's poem "As the myrtle grows green". The audience became very restless but when her sweet voice began to float out over the hall and from her mouth one heard the majestic silver sounds, "you don't find me there my love". And everybody felt the very strong impression as if they were no longer there in the hall but in heaven. The audience was struck dumb, her coloratura voice sounded into every little corner of the hall and poured out far into the street. It liberated the hearts of those who hadn't been able to get into the hall because of lack of space. There were really many people who were standing with their hearts in their throat, outside, who were just transported by her beautiful voice.

Miriam Shulman was able to reach the highest notes with her soprano, when she sang out, "I'm a slave sitting here by my sewing machine, and that's where my resting place will be." This was really the high point of her artistic creation when she sang these lines.

With her beautiful singing the people who were in the audience were conducted to a better world of art and song. All those who have survived, who heard her sing, will remember with greatest reverence the beautiful and majestic folk singer who filled everybody's heart with joy and belief that there was beauty in the world, that both beauty and art and creation of music existed in the world and that in life as well, something higher existed.

The great artist, Miriam Shulman, shared the same fate as all of Demblin's Jews, she and her husband and children went on their last road, were sent away for the last time, and never came back.

Honored be her sacred memory!

THE DEMBLIN SEXTONS

Berela Shames I knew when I was 5 years old. A Jew of average height with a heavy white beard, but with the gait of a very young person, very light footed.

When he banged on the reading desk, you could hear it throughout the whole synagogue.

Sabbath after eating, the small fry used to gather in the synagogue and get into trouble and make a big commotion. This would really get under the skin of the people who were concentrating on praying and saying their psalms. And this really made the gray bearded Shames furious. He took off his belt and with a very swift stride he strode away from the reading desk. As soon as everybody saw that he was striding around with his belt in his hand, they would stop running around the reading desk and when a few of them started to get smacked or as they were squeezing out the door, there was a big rush to get out, he would smack them around with his belt. Whoever got smacked by Berela did not show up again on the Sabbath inside the synagogue.

On Chanukah, before night fell, all of the heder children were let out of school and went to the synagogue. Every heder had staked out a little territory where they were going to sit on the benches by the wall, at the front of the building. Those that came late had to stand on the other side of the benches, by the tables. The mood was one of celebration. The synagogue was overflowing with people. The Cantor prepared to step down from the reading platform. Berela Shames banged the reading desk three times and then the Cantor began to walk with very slow steps. The moment he made that bang three times, with one voice, the little kids voices rang out, "He's walking, he's walking, he's walking, he's stepping, he's stepping, he's stepping, he's lighting, he's lighting, he's lighting". The voices of little kids flowed together with the blessings of the miracle of Chanukah. Children were extremely happy. You didn't have to go to heder at night, and you got Chanukah gelt. The same thing happened in the synagogue for all 8 nights of Chanukah.

When I came in the second class to study in the synagogue, a very serious man stood on the reading platform davening, and his name was Reb Ahron, the son of Chaim-Yidels. With his seriousness and very refined features, he called out respect from people. He was tall and erect with eyes which were full of good will. He was very pious. He used to worry about our tearing up the holy books. More than once it happened that two yeshiva boys would get into some kind of fight because of who was supposed to use a version of the bible, and Reb Ahron used to go over and separate people and say something like, "Look, is the bible guilty? Why don't you leave the bible alone. You have to make up between yourselves and don't tear the bible to pieces."

He also used to make sure there was always drinking water in the synagogue and the poor yeshiva students would have *esin tag* [meals at other people's houses]. He did whatever he could to make sure that all of that was accomplished and people were taken care of.

Each Friday Reb Ahron would walk through the town with very slow steps and bang on people's houses and call them to synagogue. He didn't miss one Jewish house or business. He saw a very holy mission in doing that.

Early on the Sabbath, Reb Ahron used to go to synagogue with Reb Gershon Rabinovitch. On the way they used to have a very pleasant chat. After they finished praying they emerged and were chatting again. When they came to Reb Ahron's house, they said good-bye to one another with a very hardy good Sabbath and the Rabbi went a few houses further and into his own dwelling.

When, 5 years later, I began to personally get to know Reb Ahron better at his house and to engage in conversation with him, he validated my sympathetic feelings towards him, those that I had originally had as a child.

There was no money for him in his function as a Shames, he just did this because he wanted to. He had to work in a little tiny bakery that he ran. That's how he made his living. And he said, "If I didn't have my children, Rafael, Meir and Hershel, I would have given up that little bakery long ago. But, it's ok, a lot of Jews in town are in a lot worse shape than me. I know this town from end to end, in a lot of houses, people are dying from hunger, not just because they never have meat and other good things to eat, but for some people, even a dry crust of bread is something that they rarely see. It really gets at you when you look around and you see the poverty that prevails in the town. God should be merciful."

As he was saying these words, Reb Ahron got up and began to pace very slowly, back and forth, in the room. I had already regretted initiating this discussion. Maybe it was time for him to conclude it. Reb Ahron, it seemed, was able to read my thoughts, he added:

"Look, our fathers built this town. We have a cemetery already, and it's been seeded and planted quite a bit. Here the earth has already absorbed the blood and sweat of generations of Jews. Our children are torn away from their homes and carried off on the wings of the wind. We go around with our heads bent. The sun does not shine for us, from every little corner, need cries out. You find 8 people crammed into one room. Things get worse from day to day. And we hear taunting words to the effect that we're strangers here. Us, who have been here and built one of the most beautiful towns in Poland, thinking that our roots would go deep in the earth and be very firm. And in the end though, they will be savagely torn out."

Reb Ahron was very thoughtful and said very quietly:

"Jerusalem, why have you forgotten us?" His thoughts wandered far, far away. "I know that you're young, and that which I've said is not something that goes down

very well. You believe that our roots are very strong here, and our branches blossom and leaves wont wither. For you, the young people, the eastern storm raised dust and put a mirage in front of your eyes. Our line hasn't really rooted itself here. Our line remains there, the place from where we were driven from two thousand years ago. That's where our roots will be renewed and where our branches will blossom and no storm will be able to wipe us out."

ARTISANS AND MERCHANTS

BY B. ZILBERMAN / HOLON

Demblin with her parties and institutions, distinguished itself with a lot of activity. Just as with all the political parties, the artisans also, with Shlomela Elenblum, the son of Beres Brosh [*Yellow Bears*], at the helm, lead a great deal of activity which embraced a big part of the Jewish population, without consideration to party membership. There were Zionists, leftists as well as religious people. Shlomela got into this work in order to find ways of doing everything that he could, to better the condition of the artisans who were struggling to make a living. Although it was known that most of the crafts people were able to make a living and some of them a little bit better than that. But the greatest part of them lived in poverty - they were able to make a living, but they didn't live very well. They would wait for the market day, which was Wednesday, when the peasants from the countryside came into town to buy things. The Jewish merchants in town felt the power of the boycott of the gentiles, because there were a lot of little shops that were not run by Jews in the countryside. The crafts people felt it less because there were far fewer gentile crafts people. The crafts people, just like the merchants, groaned under the burden of taxes.

I remember a gathering of artisans which took place around 1930 or 1931. Shlomela and others from the union management described the activity of the directorship, which devoted time and work on behalf of the membership, as always at war with the people in government who imposed the taxes, and was always demanding that on a commission of people who set the tax rates, there should be representatives of Jewish tax payers and of the unions of merchants and crafts people. Also that on the treasury board, which skins you alive with taxes, that they should have to deal with the concerns of the poor crafts person, and understand that not everybody is able to bear the terrible burden of the kinds of taxes that were being imposed.

But, as it became apparent that not everybody there was content with Shlomela's wonderful speech, a member named M. got up to speak. He banged on the table. "Comrades," he said, "I have a lot to say, but it's better that I don't say it." And then he went away and sat down. All of those who opposed the management of the union applauded him with great vigor. I don't remember, God forbid, his name. M. was known to be a very honest and honorable crafts person, nobody ever accused him of trying to cheat anybody. He lived simply from his work as a shoe maker, and his not having said anything to the gathering created a much stronger impression than if he had spoken in very flowery words.

As it came out later, comrade M., with others, were not happy with the way Shlomela was leading the union, but they didn't want to throw dirt and insult on

the management of the union and he satisfied himself with just the few words that he said, because everybody understood their implication, which was that, while it's true we were being skinned alive by taxes, at the same time the directorship of the union was taking advantage of privileges, those that only belonged to a very select group of people. In fact, their relatives.

The person who was always in the opposition within this group, Yisraelkela Gorfinkel, was forever going around and criticizing the activity of the leadership, wanting all the while to take it over himself. He wasn't able to succeed because all he had to offer was a lot of rhetoric of his own without any actions, and the vast majority of the crafts people in the union didn't trust him and they elected Shlomole again with his pals to be the leadership.

Also founded were the community credit union group and the group that helps *Bikur-Cholim* [sick people], these were under the leadership of Yarmeyohu Vanapol, Shlomela Elenboim, Levy Fictenboim, Yosef Hoftman and others. This activity was viewed with great respect and appreciation, because of its deeds. Can you imagine a greater mitzvah than to send somebody into a house, the house of a poor person who's sick, and there to be able to help him, serve him and take care of him, when the family of the sick person is all worn out and can't do anymore. Or, to take care of getting him medicines and help his family in a time of need, materially?

That's what the Demblin crafts people were like. They themselves lived poorly, without very much at all, but they were always ready to help somebody else who needed them, and often they would do that beyond their own means.

All of the institutions worked not to be rewarded.

May their memory be blessed.

[See PHOTO-A28 at the end of Section A]

OF THE LIFE OF WORKERS IN DEMBLIN

BY HERSHEL NISENBOIM / PARIS

My recollections of the struggle of workers in Demblin is first of all tied to personal memories. The writer of these lines has many such memories, and a direct relationship to the events that happened 40 years ago. It's true that in that era, there existed in Demblin other parties, organizations and institutions. But about them, certainly others will write.

THE FIRST CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

I was 10 years old at the time when the culture union was founded which was located in the last house on Dembliner Way. Although I was just a kid, I was the only kid who had the privilege to go there, because my older brother Chaim lived in a house neighboring the union and even belonged to one of the commissions within it. There also used to be little meetings in my brother's house where I stayed for a certain amount of time after I became an orphan following the death of my parents.

Of course, being just a kid at that time, it's hard for me to remember the details of the union's activity. I do remember that every Friday evening there was either a reading of some kind or a question evening or a discussion. And the same thing would happen on Saturday, during the day. At that time the two little houses that belonged to the union, were overflowing. The speakers disputed and each one wanted to show that they were more right and profound than the other.

Once, at a meeting at my brother's house, people spoke openly with a conspiratorial tone and with new images, like a red banner, demonstrations, and a struggle, and things like that. That was in 1917. A little time after that, they shut down the union. The people who were running the organization at that time were, I remember: Motel Batmer, Yichzakal Hazenfeter and others.

In the 1920's, in independent Poland, there was a new cultural organization established in the town which had more general character, without political affiliation. Its activity limited itself to speakers and lectures about scientific, literary or cultural themes. There were also question evenings. Also a drama circle was created, as well as a library. The majority of the speakers were local Jews, like the folk doctor Yarmeyohu Vanapol, who spoke about anatomy and hygiene, the teacher Kannaryenfogel, who spoke about geography and astronomy. This last person Kannaryenfogel hailed from Austria, and he got married to somebody from Demblin. He was a very well educated and knowledgeable man.

After a while they started to deal with social and political subjects as well. About these topics people like the following spoke: Ahron Tzitron, Yankel Sharfhartz, David Cholevinsky (who led the drama circle), Aly Tzirkelevitch, Ben-Tzion Kaminsky, Shloma Mekler and others, whose names I don't remember now. The majority of these people who were interested in these topics were former students in the yeshivas, they came from Hasidic homes. It was something to really wonder at, how quickly they oriented themselves and became involved in the new forms of science and idealism.

THE PROFESSIONAL UNION

During the same time that the culture union organization began to conduct its activities, there was also founded not very far away, just a few buildings away from the synagogue, the professional union of the tailor trades. As was the practice in that era, the professional organizations didn't simply restrict themselves to the struggle for bettering the economic conditions of the workers and struggling for social betterment for improvements in the society. The union established its own library and had question evenings and they had lectures. Clearly, the police kept an eye on this kind of activity, and they even controlled the attendance so that only people in the tailor trades were allowed to attend these meetings. I, being a carpenter, wasn't allowed to visit that union headquarters, unless it was to borrow a book from the library where I had a card. From time to time, I was able to slip in to one of their question evenings. That was somewhere around the year of 1922.

The stormy events in Poland in the realm of social ideology began to erupt and reverberate in the Jewish community and had a very profound effect on the life of Demblin. Within the union, people divided themselves into various groups according to their interpretation of what the real task of such an organization should be. While some of the people involved thought that the union's activities should be limited, others thought that the emphasis should be on cultural and political work. The radically inclined workers thought, therefore, that neither the professional labor oriented kinds of issues nor the cultural activity should be separated from the general political struggle that was going on in the country. They demanded action, political struggle and social activity. The debates on this topic were extremely bitter and created a tremendous amount of friction. As a result a lot of people dropped out. There was a lot of passivity and apathy among those who stayed.

THE TZ.Y.Sh.A. SOCIETY

A few weeks later, a chapter of the Central Jewish School Organization (TZ.Y.Sh.A.) was founded in Demblin. The new one was grouped around working

people without specific skills and also people who did have skills but who's very limited income didn't permit them to be enrolled in the professional union. To the new organization, which was under the leadership of the TZ.Y.Sh.A., there was also as part of that, a section of people who worked in tailor and shoe shops as well as carpenters. A meeting building was rented beyond the bridge, not far from Zalman Feldshers, and this place truly became a home for the majority of the youth in Demblin. They chose a new leadership which got down to work with great energy, with a very different kind of basis and focus than had been the case until then.

[See PHOTO-A29 at the end of Section A]

The library was made much bigger. They installed a reading room with Yiddish and Polish newspapers and magazines. There were often political lecturers and literary readings, some of them by local individuals, and others by individuals who had traveled to Demblin. The question evenings, the drama circle and the various education circles, deepened the political consciousness as well as the cultural level of both Demblin's youth and adult population. The Jewish population read books and interested itself in social problems.

The anti-Semitism in Poland spread. Jews began to suffer from economic boycotts and anti-Jewish campaigns. And all of this strengthened the feelings of resistance among the youth. The Union had its own little cadre of leadership, old as well as new. Yankel Bubis, Dina Tzigelman, Godel Milgroim, Chana-Gitel Wasserman, David Cholevinsky, Yosel-Natan Cholevinsky, Avraham Avramowitz, Yisrael Sharfhartz, Ali Tzirkelevitch, the author of these lines and others.

The first and most important task which the Union set for itself was to enlarge the membership of the Union and to begin to regulate the work day, that is, the hours of the work day. At that time, the Jewish workers of Demblin still didn't know what it meant to have an 8 hour work day. Most people simply worked from very early in the morning until night. In the winter evenings, as soon as the candles were lit, the workers used to go back to their shop and work some more hours, which were included in the work week, but it certainly didn't earn them any more higher pay.

The struggle to shorten the work day was a very difficult one. The employed, the majority of them, were often family members, if not relatives, of the employers, and try and go and start a war about an 8 hour work day with people like that. There were just 3 of the businesses where there weren't family members involved. The leadership of the professional union understood though that if we couldn't regulate the question of the work day in Demblin there was no point for the Union to even exist. The struggle began. First, for a 12 hour workday, after that, for an 11 hour work day. Of course, since the strike wasn't a general one, that meant it

didn't include all of the Jewish workshops and factories, just certain trades, until we saw the first results.

THE STRIKE OF THE CARPENTERS

The union of the wood workers, though it didn't have a very large membership, was nevertheless extremely well organized and saturated with a will to struggle and fight. When they declared a strike, it was carried out with great stubbornness and solidarity. At that time the carpenters worked 10 hours a day, which at that time in itself, was something of an achievement.

I remember once, after Passover, a bitter strike broke out by the Jewish carpenters of Demblin which lasted over 6 weeks. Neither side had any intention of giving in. The employers were also very well organized in their organization, and the demand for a 9 hour work day was, in their eyes, absolutely crazy, senseless, and impermissible. How long ago was it, they complained, that you worked a 14 hour day and then a 13 hour day, and now you want a 9 hour day? After the first 3 weeks of the strike, it became apparent that some of the workers were in very, very bad shape, without even a bit of bread. There wasn't anybody even to help them out. In a meeting of the strikers it was decided that we should turn to those who directed the public works, which at that time, paved the streets and roads of Demblin and that all of us, without exception, all of us striking carpenters, should take on that work. After a short period of negotiations, on the second day, with shovels on our shoulders, we went off to work very early and at night we got up like in the morning and marched back home.

The achievement of our wood workers, to which I belonged, inspired a lot of attention and respect among Jews, and no less among the Polish community. But the main thing was, the Jewish employers, who had demonstrated their stubbornness to the strikers, finally got the point that the fight was over.

WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE POLISH UNIONS

The victorious strike of the carpenters was a great victory for the Jewish unions. If you add to that the wide cultural activity that they engaged in with which we were able to serve the surrounding towns as well as the sympathy that we gained among the Polish workers, the labor unions really had something to be proud of.

The Polish labor unions and the local organization of the P.P.S., the Polish Socialist Party, turned to us with a suggestion that we work together. Although our political orientation was somewhat different than theirs, nevertheless, in many respects we had a lot in common. The more conscious, leftist and progressive elements in the P.P.S. understood very well the specific problems and needs of the

Jewish workers. And they really made a point of having two Jewish members of our union, Yosef-Nuach Cholevinsky and myself, attend regular meetings of the Polish unions representing the employees of the train line from the public works workers and others. Two other questions we were able to deal with in common, had to do with a fund for sick people and evening courses to study the Polish language. A course such as this did in fact get started, but it was located at the train station, which made it hard for our pupils to go there regularly.

At the meetings from the general counsel of the professional unions, there were often talks on political topics by speakers from the P.P.S. deputy from our congressional district. After a talk like that the discussion was free, and the mood was very brotherly.

Before the first of May, the Polish workers suggested that together we make a common demonstration, the Jewish and the Polish workers, under the banner of the P.P.S. party. The two of us who had been attending these meetings answered on the spot that we really couldn't respond, we had to bring it back to our people. From one side it seemed like simply an historical event, an opportunity for the Jewish and Polish workers to come together and demonstrate. It was appropriate because it was a holiday of international workers - solidarity. On the other side though, there was fear that the leftist Jewish workers in the town would not agree to demonstrate with the socialist party, because according to them, the socialist party was more like a socialist fascist party, if not a party of socialist traitors. Finally it was decided to demonstrate together, but, each separate union would march under their own banner, so that it wouldn't appear that everybody was simply marching under the banner of the P.P.S.

At that point a feverish activity began to prepare the banners and everybody had to have their own banner. At that time we had wonderful professional organizations in Demblin, but nobody had a banner. So we bought red satin and with silk thread, we began to embroider in both Yiddish and Polish letters, the names of the union. There were also red ribbons for the decorations that had to be sewed on. There were placards with various slogans which were attached to sticks. They spelled out the character of the workers' holiday. The work of embroidering and sewing these banners was one in which certain sisters distinguished themselves. For instance, the Tishelman and Rotschild sisters, Rivka Shlimer and others. They sat until late at night at their work.

Until today, the memory of that majestic spring day is deeply engraved in me. We marched out from our union locals to a central gathering point by the town hall, in the center of town, where there were lots of Polish workers assembled. After everybody greeted each other, the train of people started going through the town and through the five little villages around until we got to the train station which was about 3 kilometers away. Along the whole way, Jews and Christians,

together, were kind of astonished by the nature of the demonstration, which was an integrated one. It left an unforgettable impression on everybody.

POLICE TORTURE

The Demblin police also were extremely impressed by this demonstration. But the impression that they received was a very bad one. It seemed to them that there was a tremendous amount of danger in the commonality with which Jewish and Polish workers had found in their solidarity. That was very risky in a town where there was a rail head, a military fortress and garrison, and an airfield. The police were also acquainted with the fact that a large number of the Jewish workers were communist or communist minded. That very night, there were searches conducted of the houses of all the people who were the real movers and shakers in the Union, as well as in the Union hall, where they ripped open a door, took out all the books, all the documents, and all the placards and banners. They also arrested people. I was one of them. They took us to the holding cell of the police station. In the middle of the night they took us out for an interrogation and two Demblin secret agents had arrived from Lublin with a Jewish piece of crap, and together they tortured and beat us. Our banners lay on the table, the interrogators asked about the meanings of each Jewish letter and at the same time smacked people around murderously. We understood that this was an act of revenge for the Jewish-Polish solidarity that had been demonstrated that first day of May.

In the morning they let some of the people go. They took some of them to Lublin, to the infamous prison on "Zameck" street. They let me go as well, because I was the secretary of the legal union organization, the Tz.Y.Sh. organization.

Despite these arrests our work continued. In place of those who had been incarcerated and were on trial, others came forward. The police repression did not break our spirit and will and the youth continued to fight for a better tomorrow.

I TAKE MY LEAVE OF DEMBLIN

In January of 1930 I left Demblin to emigrate to France. A hundred young people and adults came, belonging to various groups and organizations. They came to say good-bye to me at a special evening. I was really moved by the gratitude and the honor from so many comrades and friends who had shared the same road and work with me. On the other side it really hurt to have to go away and leave behind my home, my family, my acquaintances, and who could have imagined at that time that this was going to be the last farewell with my brothers, Chaim, Ahron-Yitzhak, Efraim and Moshe; with my three sisters - Peseh, Libe and Leah-Hodis; that I would never again see my brother-in-laws and sister-in-laws with their children, a family of over 30 people, which was murdered by Hitler.

OUR JEWISH BANK

BY ROIZA HELDMAN-BANTMAN / PARIS

After finishing school I went to work at the Jewish Bank which was located in the house of Jelachovsky. The bank developed very rapidly, and so, the Committee Director, Joseph Brash, decided to build a building for the bank itself.

It didn't take long for the project to develop, and there stood a modern bank with the big conference room for meetings, a little office for the Director and a reception hall for the clientele to come in to do their business.

My work in the bank brought me into contact with all strata of our Jewish population. I grew to love my work because it allowed me to have contact with most of the Jews of Demblin. I also was able to familiarize myself with many painful problems of daily life.

In 1932 I left my work at the bank, got married, and left my home town. I went away to Paris where I find myself today.

In 1938, on a pleasure trip, I went back to my old home. My joy was great to meet my dear mother, brothers, the whole family, as well as many friends. It was also a great experience for me to go to the bank which was for me tied up with so many people who were close.

After the great city of Paris, the little streets of Demblin seemed extremely small and narrow, but so very dear and loved. Still today the images I have of my home town hover in my mind just as if I'd seen them yesterday and a very tender longing draws me back to those days of the past....

Today I remember with great longing my dear family and beloved friends, those who were so tragically torn away from us, horribly and brutally murdered.

THE HOME, REVISIONIST ORGANIZATION, MODZJITZER HASIDIM

BY DAVID SHULMAN / TEL AVIV

I was born in Demblin of very Hasidic and religious parents. There were five children in our family, four sons and a daughter. My father, Reb Avish, had a very distinguished face. He had a successful men's clothing store and he was a distinguished Modzjitzer Hasid. The image of my father that stands before my eyes is on Friday evening, when he was going to the Modzjitzer Rebbe, accompanied by his four sons, very smartly attired in silk coats and satin hats - he almost seemed like a Sabbath queen. The house was brightly lit, the table covered with a beautiful table cloth, and the great silver cup stood ready, waiting for my father to take it in his hand and make Kiddish. Earlier he had said a very beautiful Sholom Aleichem, made kiddish, washed his hands before eating, and my mother served the table. After eating the fish, my father with his four sons, began to sing songs.

[See PHOTO-A30 at the end of Section A]

We sang very beautifully and a lot of people would stand by the window in those days.

I studied in various heders from Aleph-Bet to the Gemorah. I also studied in the Modzjitzer synagogue, with the Rabbi's grandchildren.

As soon as I turned 15, I left the Hasidic life style and entered a Zionist organization. Five years later, as I became acquainted with the program of the Revisionist organization, I decided to join that.

I began to read the Revisionist press, "The World", in which Z. Jabotinsky used to write, as well as Dr. Schwartzbard, Yochanan Progrevisky, Professor Kloyzner and others.

In our town there was a Zionist organization, culture circle, a small businessmen's union, a crafts peoples union, and an illegal communist party. The culture union had a very beautiful library as well as a drama circle. The small businessmen's union had a very varied kind of activity and had their own lending institution which used to help their members.

But none of that really pleased me or really got me excited. I decided that I would start a Revisionist organization in Demblin. Despite the fact that I had just gotten married and had to think about making a living, I decided to turn towards Warsaw, to the central headquarters of the Revisionist organization, so they could help create a Revisionist party in Demblin. I quickly received an answer. They sent me posters to put up in town about the famous speakers they would send, among

them Meir Grossman. I rented the fire station and I put up the posters all over town. As soon as somebody tore one down, I put up another one, until the speaker arrived.

The meeting took place in an overflowing hall. It seemed like all of Demblin's youth, both the rightists and the leftists, even the extreme leftists, were present. There were also distinguished businessmen there. As soon as Grossman began to speak, the Communists started to make an uproar. But, thanks to his energetic bearing and agility, the meeting was carried through with great success. Finally we called all of the sympathizers to meet at the restaurant of Nechomela Bekerblut, because we didn't have an organization hall yet. This was the founding meeting of the Revisionist organization. With the participation of Reb Yerchmiel Meltzer, a very handsome Jew, a shoe salesman; Moshe-Yosel Hochman, president of the small-businessmen's union; Yuel Guthartz, member of the directorship of the small crafts people's union; Natan Vanapol, dentist, a distinguished individual in town; Yichael Luxenburg and Moshe-Mordechai Melaver. With those people I've just recollected, I, together with them, formed the Revisionist organization in Demblin. We began to recruit members. From day to day, the party got bigger. We built very fine organizations: (Brit Hachayil [Jabotinski's military organization], Brit Hatzohar [evolutionary of Brit Hachayil]). We began to provide courses in Hebrew with the participation of comrade Zilberberg from Lublin, and comrade Siegal from Warsaw. We had a very beautiful library, and also a drama circle under the direction of comrade Guthartz. From time to time we used to produce various events, the proceeds of which would go to Hebrew charitable organizations.

The Brit Hachayil under the leadership of Commander Natan Vanapol, used to participate in all of the Polish celebrations and not more than once their participation was more exciting than that of the Polish military. They also carried out various marches through the streets of Demblin, The Brit Hachayil also established a kosher kitchen at Passover for the Jewish soldiers who were stationed at the Demblin fortress and the author was involved in the work of this kitchen for many hours. The Jewish soldiers from Demblin were lead off for 8 days at Passover thanks to the efforts of the Revisionist organization. They got 3 meals a day, of the finest quality.

The Revisionists held the majority of the seats on the Jewish council. The president was a commander of the Brit Hachayil, Commander Natan Vanapol. We used to, every year, receive a subsidy from the Jewish Council for the soldier's kitchen and the rest was covered by the Polish regime. We received a lot of thank you letters from the Jewish soldiers. It's a shame that all of these letters of thanks and the photographs were destroyed along with our dear ones.

I want to remember the day when I received from the central headquarters permission to travel on a legal ship to Palestine. It made a very powerful

impression on me as well as on my comrades. They made a banquet celebration for me. It was very hard to tear myself away from my comrades and friends. I remember how the devoted comrades accompanied me to Warsaw, among them: Ben-Tzion Kaminsky, Reb Yerchamiel Meltzer, my brother Emanuel Shulman, as well as my unforgettable wife and two dear children: Yaacov and Sarale. We said good-bye with great feeling with the hope that we would meet each other again in Palestine, but fate had something else in store. Of all of my whole family, which numbered over a hundred people, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles and near relatives, the only one to remain alive was my daughter, who by some miracle was saved. Also, two cousins were saved, I only learned about them recently: Velvel Shulman, who lives in Paris, and Avram Shulman, who lives in Belgium.

I'm going to leave Demblin behind for now, because I don't remember exactly if I was born in Demblin, Ivangorod, Irena or in Modzjitz. But it's with Modzjitz that I want to deal with now, because Modzjitz was, according to my belief, the first Jewish name of the town, with the Modzjitzer Rebbe at the head of that community.

As I remember, Modzjitz was a town where people made a living, because on one side it had a big fortress with military and on the other side there was the airfield. Also, every Wednesday, there was a market to which lots of peasants used to come from the surrounding countryside with their horses and wagons. They brought different kinds of produce and with the money they earned for it they used to patronize the merchants in town.

Besides making a living, our Jews had a lot of pleasure in the fact that Modzjitz had the great Jewish Hasidic composer.

The Modzjitzer Rebbe had a beautiful court yard, a big house, a big study hall, an orchard with various fruit trees, and a big garden in which to walk. It had its own bath house which was separated into different sections and two beautiful carriages, an open one and a closed one with 2 powerful horses, like lions.

Every evening, the Rabbi used to go out with his sons for a walk. They walked very slowly in their immaculate, beautiful fur hats, white pressed shirts, silk coats and very nicely pressed pants.

At this point I'd like to remember certain Modzjitzer Hasidim: Reb Kalman Zucker - a big timber merchant; Reb Yichzakel Shulman - a big broker, and a very smart man, well known over all of Poland; Reb Avish Shulman - a very handsome Jew, a big men's clothing merchant; Reb Hershel Shener - a wholesale merchant of grains; T. Warantzberg - a wholesale merchant of products from the farms; Reb David Wasserman - a leather merchant; Mordechai-Wolf Rozenblat - a watch maker.

But that's all in the past, and is no more.

THE HIGH HOLIDAYS IN OUR TOWN

BY TZVI EICHENBRENNER / RAMAT-GAN

The most lovely memories of my earliest childhood years which are forever carved into my memory, belong to, without a doubt, the high holidays.

With the arrival of the month of Elul, all of a sudden, over night, the summer began to end. The early mornings became sad and gray, the days, little by little, began to be shorter, the nights, longer and cooler. More often, in the afternoon hours, winds began to blow. The fields stood empty, as if lost in thought, after the grain crops had been harvested. A longing beyond our understanding began to nag at our heart.

The big bustling market in the mornings was full of high piled wagons of the peasants. Big baskets with ripe fruit just taken off the trees, beautiful red faced pears, honey sweet apples, satin black Hungarian plums, famous, juicy and golden. Among the wagons, the women who sold things in the market would hurry around, look over and chose from the biggest baskets. As soon as the market started, very early in the morning, the peasants spread out their baskets with hens, geese and ducks, the Jewish house wives would go around and chose the prettiest fowl to *shlow kapures*.

The whole year, when everybody had been quarreling with each other, now in the high holidays, everybody became different. Enemies who had not spoken with one another, even one word, not even a good morning, made up with each other and forgave all of their complaints. People ran to pray earlier than usual. Early in the morning one heard the shofar blowing in the temple, every Jew became more serious.

On Slichot, when the hammering of the wooden hammer on the shutters resounded throughout the town, the Jews quickly got up from their beds in the middle of the night and all of the streets flowed to Slichot. The temple and the little shuls of the Hasidim were packed with people at prayer, men and women, young and old. From a distance one heard the God fearing Demblin Jews in the beautiful autumn night.

After Rosh Hashanah, one felt immediately the coming Yom Kippur. At night, in the evenings, from the closed attics and rooms, one heard the crowing of hens, a kind of lonely, desperate sound. Longer than usual, Jews spent time in the synagogue, praying. In tallis and tfillin they stood around the long wooden tables on which the prayer books for the holidays were spread open. Some bought a *Machzor* [prayer book for the holidays], or a Siddur or a Sefer. One forgot about making a living and just thought about trying to come up with repentance.

In the big court yard of Yitzhak Shochet [*ritual butcher*], the whole day, from early in the morning until night, there was activity like a beehive. Feathers flew in the air, wives, young girls and young boys, with stuffed fowl, came in and came out, pushed their way through and screamed at each other, and these screams could be heard in seventh heaven. Inside in the slaughtering room everybody was covered with feathers from head to foot. The birds, who had been stuffed and killed, were hanging with their heads down and their wings spread out. People were pulling their feathers out. Yitzhak Shochet was a handsome, slender, dignified looking Jew, with a long gray beard and payes. He was dressed in a broad Tallis with Tzitzit. From his back a red sash stuck out. The whole day, from early morning until late at night, he stood silently with a very pious face. As soon as somebody handed him a bird, he took out a knife from between his teeth, and like that the slaughtered hen was tossed into the bucket.

Before Yom Kippur, the town became very different. Nobody even thought of doing any kind of business or of going to work. The market place was empty and deserted. There weren't any peasants' wagons around either. From dawn on people hurried and rushed to pray. After praying one annulled vows. One said psalms. Afterwards one went to the ritual bath house and took a bath. Afterwards one ate something and went off to the temple to pray *mincha* [evening prayer].

[See PHOTO-A31 at the end of Section A]

After praying with great dedication and beating one's breast everybody went to the long wooden table by the door where there were little boxes and cans for various charities and good works. There people threw in some money, kissed the mezuzah and went home.

Before Yom Kippur eve, dressed up in holiday garments, the whole family sat down by the table with the wood candles in brass candle sticks and ate a feast. While making the blessing over the candles, the mother would stand in a silk white kerchief over her head and quietly cry for each one in the family and for the whole Jewish people, she would pray to God. Everyone in the house, even the father would have tears in their eyes. Soon neighbors began to come over and people would wish each other a good year. In the street one heard the crying of women as they greeted each other.

After the blessing of the candles, the town took on another appearance. With tallisim under their arms and with pious, serious, thoughtful faces, Jews dressed in their cleanest, pressed clothes, some in a long, simple overcoat with belt wrapped around at the waste, and some in a white jacket with tallis over the satin overcoat and with a satin hat and a brim, and a pair of rubber galoshes on the feet. The women in long, white, silk clothes, wearing earrings with big, fat siddurs in their

hands, the little children in clean, neat jackets and round hats. Everybody hurried to the temple and to the little Hasidic shuls.

At Kol Nidre the big synagogue was lit up and packed, both in the main part and in the women's part, with people at prayer. In little boxes of sand which were on the long wooden table and the high broad windows on all sides of the synagogue, were placed tens of big Yarzeit candles, which were burning. In the crowding in which one could barely move around stood a packed congregation wrapped in Tallisim with open prayer books in their hands and some of them very piously *gashokeled* [davened], quietly, heart breakingly they said a prayer before Kol Nidre.

Above, on the carved wood *bimah* [reading desk], with little steps on both sides, stood two men from the town who were Shamesim [sextons] and one of them was my father. Both of them were very dignified looking Jews. They continually looked to the eastern side to Rabbi Gershon who stood before the Cantor's desk in a white shawl with a broad silver shawl over his head and with great piety he said the prayer "Zakai". When the Shames struck three times, suddenly, everything became absolutely quiet in the synagogue and you could even hear the rustling of the little curtains over the Torah. The Rabbi with seven of the respected men of the town, wrapped up in tallisim, went with the Torah around the reading desk and the Rabbi with a loud, clear voice said the "*Or zaruah letzadek*". Afterwards, they took the Torah back and placed it in the Ark.

Kol Nidre was prayed with heart felt emotion and the congregation prayed along with great feeling and ecstasy. Each word, each groan, each "oiy", came out with so much spiritual pleasure that the congregation felt they were in a state of great religious feeling. Kol Nidre was heard at a great distance.

Early in the morning, through the open windows of the synagogue, one heard the "Adon Olam". Jews with their tallisim came into the synagogue until after "Shachrit". Nobody hardly felt the fast. The man who led the prayers generally was a very serious Jew. The business man who dealt in tailor cloth, Chaim-Ahron, his heart felt tasty voice was heard even in the last row of benches in the women's part of the synagogue. In the afternoon hours, the old, gray headed Yitzhak Shochet prayed. For hours he stood near the Cantor's desk and in a hoarse, devoted voice, prayed.

The congregation tried to forget about the fact that they were fasting, even though it was hard to sit in one place. The wagon drivers, taxi drivers, porters, would stand around outside near the door, in order to get a little bit of fresh air. But when they heard one of the important prayers, they would immediately rush back into synagogue.

In the period before "neilah", the synagogue was almost completely empty of people who were praying. People were just sitting around outside. Somebody, somewhere, at a table, bent over an open prayer book with half open eyes, stood a dreaming, hungry and tired Jew. A lot of people were lying down on the benches, with the tallisim under their heads, trying not to faint. It didn't help to smell tobacco or other kinds of sharp snuff. The half burned out, dripping candles, sputtered and gave off an unpleasant odor. They melted down towards each other, flamed up and then failed again and were extinguished.

Davidel Wasserman always cheered up the congregation. He was one of the confidants of the old Modzjitzer Rabbi, Rabbi Yisrael Taub, blessed be his memory. He was famous, far beyond Demblin, among the Hasidim for his scholarship and his religious songs. Besides that he was a genuinely modest person. When he began to pray, the synagogue filled up with others praying, even the Hasidim came from their little synagogues, in order to hear him. And when Davidel, at "neilah", stood before the Cantor's desk, the congregation, as soon as the first words were spoken, with great, deep spiritual pleasure and feeling, the whole congregation forgot that they were fasting. Each one, as if from a deep and secret, inner source, touched their own regret and remorse. And again the congregation became more lively as if they all drew fresh, new strength. Everybody stood with open prayer books and with great devotion and deep feeling, *geschuckled*. Nobody gave a thought to the fact that the day was almost about to end. Outside the sun had long since gone down. The sinking flames threw out just the faintest light. Reb Davidel, as if he had found a secret spiritual strength, even more powerfully and louder, said the prayers of the evening, the songs of the "Neilot". High and distant, in the half darkness of the synagogue reverberated the voices, singing "*Petach Lanu Shair, Baat Neilot Shair*", as the Jews prayed with their last strength. When Reb Davidel, in a broken, crying voice, said the very last words, "*Vhair Moshpelet ad shoal tachite*", one heard a loud sobbing from among those who prayed, and even us, the young people, cried a little bit.

IN THE SINGING HALL

BY A. B. YADAR

Bnei hechala dichsifin

Lemachaze ziv ze'er anpin

The *niggun* [tune] goes on, trembling and shaking, notes hanging in the dense darkness. Prayer and hope have merged into one. The Rabbi's voice is loud and strong; his Hasidim answer him with bright, longing voices. The smell of salted fish mixes with that of foaming brew. The light from a memorial candle throws dancing shadows on the wall; a baby who lost his father's hand cries loud. When the last notes of the *niggun* are heard, only the rustling of the Hasidim's silken coats, pushing against each other's shoulders, is heard at the table. Then the Rabbi says Torah verses relating to the day's event, blessing the Hasidim with a hearty *lechayim* [toast-"to life"] and again the *niggun* goes on, from all attending, and overcomes all, all...

When did we see this? When were we swept by such uplifting prayer? Was it in Poland before the Holocaust? Perhaps somewhere in a Jerusalem alley near the Hasidic section? Or perhaps atop one of the Bnei Brak hills, the city of study and holiness, "occupied" by the Hasidim?

No, not in pre-Holocaust Poland and not in Jerusalem or Bnei Brak, but at the very heart of Dizengof Street in Tel Aviv. Here, in the street of this lighthearted city, filled with desire, fast food, drunkenness and lust -- this is where the Modzjitz Court is, continuing to produce its pure, clear songs, just like in years before.

In Tel Aviv's Culture Hall, at the beginning of Dizengof Street, which was built solely for music, different notes are heard. Here is where political conventions and mass meetings are held during election campaigns. In Kassit, just up the street, the cafe of the bohemian artists, people get intoxicated and talk vulgarities, and more shadows than lights are cast. The pure music, the holy *niggun*, are kept now only here, in the two-story white house on 36 Dizengof. This is the place where the Chief Rabbi of Modzjitz, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu Taub, chose as his seat. In this house *niggunim* are sung, of longings, happiness, hope, joy. And here, in these days, the tension is increasing by the day towards the High Holidays. People in the know say that by now the Rabbi has composed a significant number of new *niggunim* for the services of the Holy Days, and no doubt that on Rosh Hashana Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu will give the world no less than twenty new *niggunim* of his composition.

THE NIGGUN KINGDOM

How does the Rabbi bring the new *niggunim* to his Hasidim and to the hundreds who flock to the Hall of *Niggun*? Does he distribute music sheets between them? Or

perhaps invites the most musical Hasidim to his home and teaches them how to sing his tunes?

Not at all. The truth is that the Rabbi has so far composed some five hundred niggunim that are widely sung. And not only does he not know how to write music; he does not even know how to read it. He also does not play any musical instrument and does not know how to conduct a choir.

He composes the niggunim using three of his organs: the heart, which is the most important, the brain, and the mouth. The Rabbi learned from his grandfather, the First Admor of Modzjitz Rabbi Yisrael, that when the heart is full, overflowing and pouring, it is time to convert those feelings to niggunim. Not just to hollow tunes, but to those passing through the heart and being formed by it. Combination after combination, purification after purification, and only then should the mouth utter the niggun's notes, which flow forth from the heart and go through the brain's paths...

Such a niggun probably does not need notes or special musical instruments. "Niggunim that leave the heart, enter the heart," is one of the favorite sayings of the House of Modzjitz. But to understand the secret of the creation of this house, one should know a little about its past, the source from which the niggun's river flows, sweeping away Dizengof Street's secular life.

The roots of the House of Modzjitz go back to the Tzaddik Rabbi Yechezkeleh of Kuzmiere. It is well known that this tzaddik said: "A shabbat without a new niggun does not feel to me like Shabbat." But none of his niggunim are known today. Today we do not know whether he himself composed niggunim or his singing Hasidim brought them to his table, as it is the custom with other admors. But if he did not produce niggunim, he did indeed have a theory all about the niggun's qualities and praise. According to Rabbi Yechezkeleh, the mitzvah of lending a hand to your friend extends to the works of the niggun: "When you see your friend singing a niggun, it is a mitzvah for you to join him and sing with him."

Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, son of Rabbi Yechezkeleh of Kuzmiere, who lived in the town of Zvolin, was a great singer. Suddenly he stopped singing and did not sing for the rest of his life. What happened? He revealed the secret: "I enjoy singing too much, and I believe that a Jew is forbidden from so much joy in this world." For many years he resisted the urge to sing.

It was Rabbi Yisrael Taub, the first Rabbi of Modzjitz, who formed the Hall of Niggun, provided it with color and made it famous. Rabbi Yisrael Taub is the son of Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu and the grandson of Rabbi Yechezkeleh. Rabbi Yisrael made the House of Modzjitz a model for the entire Jewish world. Modzjitz niggunim are not just for those under the Modzjitz roof, but an asset for all the Jews. There is no shtetle of Hasidim in which a Modzjitz niggun is not heard.

That is how the Hall of Niggun was erected, floor after floor. Its two foundations are Rabbi Yechezkeleh of Kuzmiere and Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, son of the Rabbi of Zvolin. Its three floors are of Rabbi Yisrael of Modzjitz, Rabbi Saul Yedidiah, and Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, the current admor, son of Rabbi Saul Yedidiah and grandson of Rabbi Yisrael.

Like his father and grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel composes niggunim without using written notes or musical instruments. In the middle of the night, when the angels sing in heaven, or at dawn, "when all morning stars sing together," Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, Admor of Modzjitz, can be seen walking to and fro on his balcony, silver threads streaking his black beard; his eyes are closed in concentration, his body wrapped in a blue silken robe knitted with leaves and flowers, for hours walking on the balcony, enflamed with enthusiasm, engulfed with ideas -- then the new niggun is created, from the hearth through the brain to the lips... And once the niggun is at the lips, the Rabbi will never forget it. He is talented. If he sings a niggun once through, he will sing it again a month and two and more later.

SINGING OF THE WORLDS

When Shabbat comes, the Rabbi leaves his residence in the upper floor to his beautiful *beit hamidrash* [synagogue] on the ground floor. Sometimes he conducts the service himself. If it is a special occasion, he might surprise the participants with a new niggun, composed recently. He would sing the niggun once or twice by himself, in rhythm and moderation. The Hasidim who are good at singing will try to absorb the sounds, then repeat quietly with the Rabbi, then, at the third or fourth time, the niggun would be sung by all. This would be another niggun added to thousands of others created at the House of Modzjitz.

A few hours later, the "table" is conducted in the synagogue. The Rabbi sits at the head of the table, to his right is his only son Rabbi Yisrael Dan, who is also a great singer. The Rabbi, agile in his movements, wears a nice robe and a high, black Hasidic fur hat, Polish style. His hand holds a golden tobacco box. Hasidim are seated around the table. The Rabbi passes his long, gentle fingers on the table as if he were playing the piano, and immediately starts to sing a niggun, emulating piano keys.

The Hasidim slowly join his singing, with bass and with soprano. Then the singing breaks out into the street, with the big lights and the fluorescent lamps. By that time many have assembled outside the house and many have entered. They include youngsters wearing knit *yarmulkes* [skull caps] and other Jews wearing hats of all types. They come in to the overfilled room, standing on their toes to see the singing Rabbi. Others, wearing no yarmulkes, hang out by the windows, putting their ears close to the wall, standing like that for a long time. Those wearing knit-yarmulkes try to memorize the songs in order to teach them in their clubs. The ones without the

yarmulkes tap their feet with the rhythm, sometimes shedding a tear, which rolls down their shaven faces to their open shirts.

THE HOLY DAYS

People once came to Rabbi Saul Yedidiah and told him that many yeshiva boys left their studies and came to his synagogue to listen to his singing, and therefore they neglected their Torah studies. He answered: it is said on God that he chooses the Torah, but it is also said that he chooses songs. Both Torah and song are God's choices. There are those who worship God by studying the Torah, and there are those who worship in songs of praise.

If it is so during the year, it is more so when the Holy Days are nearing.

Usually the Rabbi brings new niggunim to prayers such as Kaddish. His Hasidim expect him to come up with new niggunim. Sometimes the Rabbi travels to Jerusalem to combine something from the atmosphere of the Holy City in his niggunim.



דער מאַרק אין דעמבלין-מאָדזשיץ



השוק בדמבלין-מודז'יץ

The Market Place in Demblin-Modzjitz
(PAGE 19 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A1



הלווייתו של ה"פלדשר" זלמן ווינאָפּל. המספיד — יוסף גליבטר
די לווייה פון פעלדשער זלמן ווינאָפּעל. ס'איז אים מספיד — יוסף געליבטער

The Funeral of the Healer Zalman Vanapol
Eulogized by Yosef Gilibter
(PAGE 48 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A2



Funeral of a Member of the Burial Society,
Yisrael-Ahron Buntman, zal
(PAGE 53 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A3



At the Demblin Cemetery -- The Gravestone of the First Jewish Mayor,
Yosef-Yidel Dejentshal, zal
(PAGE 74 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A4



סניף של „בנק לאומי
פולני” בדמבלין
אָפטיילונג פון „נאַ-
ראַדאווי באַנק פּאָל-
סקי” אין דעמבלין

A Portion of the "Poland National Bank" in Demblin

(PAGE 77 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A5



דער לעצטער רב אין
דעמבלין, גרשון ראָ-
בינאוויטש זצ"ל
הרב האחרון בדמב-
לין, גרשון רבינוביץ'
זצ"ל

The Last Rabbi in Demblin, Gershon Rabinovitch, zal

(PAGE 81 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A6



דער אַרטיקער גמינע-ראַט

המועצה המקומית („גמינה“)

The Town Hall
(PAGE 85 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A7



מדמויותנו (מימין לשמאל): חיים אברמוביץ' („דז'אדק“); דוד חייץ (קאוציק);
אברהם בוקשפן; יחיאל הרשמן.

From right to left: Chaim Avramovitz (The Tzaddek); David Chitz (Kovtzik);
Avram Buckspan; Yichiel Hershman
(PAGE 88 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A8



הרשל הסבל • הערשל טרעגער • לייביש העיוור • דער בלינדער לייביש

(left photo) Leibish, The Blindman (right photo) Hershel, The Porter
(PAGE 90 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A9



דאס הויז פון „לינת הצדק“

בנין „לינת הצדק“

Building "Lint Hatzeddakah" [Charity Organization]
(PAGE 92 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A10



א גרופע חלוצים

קבוצת חלוצים

A Chalutzim Group
(PAGE 95 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A11



מצעד חברי התנועה הציונית בדמבלין — על דגלה החדש
אויפמארש פון דער ציוניסטישער ארגאניזאציע מיטן נייעם פאן

A March of the Members of the Zionist Movement of Demblin with their New Flag
(PAGE 98 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A12



משלחת יהודית עם הרב רבינוביץ' מקבלת את פני המרשל יוזף פילסודסקי בעת ביקורו בדמבלין ב-1925
א יידישע דעלעגאציע בראש מיטן הרב ראבינאוויטש באגריסט דעם מארשאלעק יוזעף פילסודסקי בעונ זיין באזוך אין דעמבלין אין 1925

**A Jewish Delegation, headed by Rabbi Rabinovitch, greets Marshal Yozef Pilsudski
During His Visit to Demblin in 1925**

(PAGE 112 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A13



המורה שטיינהמער עם תלמידותיה • די לערערין שטיינהאמער מיט אירע שילערנס

The Teacher Shteinhammer with Her Girl Students

(PAGE 115 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A14



הלווייתו של ה"פלדער" זלמן וויינאפל ז"ל — ליד בית-המדרש
די לווייה פון פעלדשער זלמן וויינאפעל ז"ל — לעבן בית-המדרש

The Funeral of the "Folk Doctor" Zalman Vanapol -- The Synagogue
(PAGE 123 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A15



Trade School in Demblin
(PAGE 132 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A16



„החלוץ הצעיר“

"The Young Pioneers"
(PAGE 134 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A17



יַעֲדַת הַתְּרַבּוֹת שֶׁל הָאִיגוּד הַמְּקֻצָּעִי • קולטור־קאמיסיע פון פראפעסיאנעלן באריין

The Trade Union's Culture Committee
(PAGE 137 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A18



1930 — ביקורו של אחיו של הרב קוק זצ"ל בדמבלין מטעם קק"ל
1930 — באזוך פון הרב קוקס ברודער אין דעמבלין פארן קרן קיימת

1930

Visit of Rabbi Cook's Brother in Demblin in front of the Benevolent Front Building
(PAGE 142 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A19



מסיבת פרידה לרגל עלייתו של אריה בוקשפן (1932)
געזעענונג-מסיבה צום עולה זיין פון לייבל בוקשפאן קיין א"י (1932)

Farewell Party in Honor of the Emmigration of Arye Buckspan (1932)

(PAGE 145 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A20



רעליגיעזע מיידל־שול „בית־יעקב“

בית־ספר דתי לבנות „בית יעקב“

A Religious Girl's School "House Of Jacob"

(PAGE 150 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A21



יצחק'ל ווארשעווער ז"ל

Yitzchakil Varshever, zal
(PAGE 157 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A22



קבוצת חברים מהסניף הציוני בדמבלין עם אורחים מחו"ל
א גרופע חברים פון דער ציוניסטישער ארגאניזאציע מיט געסט פון אויסלאנד

Members of Demblin's Zionist Chapter with Guests from Abroad
(PAGE 161 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A23



קבוצת חלוצים הנפרדים מח' זילברמן לרגל עלייתו לא"י (22.12.33)
א גרופע חלוצים געזעגנט זיך מיטן ח' זילבערמאן צו זיין עולה זיין קיין א"י (22.12.23)

A Group of Pioneers Bidding Farewell to the Member Zilberman
Before His Leaving to Israel (December 22, 1933)

(PAGE 163 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A24



קבוצת חברים מן „השומר הלאומי”
א גרופע חברים פון „השומר הלאומי”

A Group of the "National Guard" Members
(PAGE 165 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A25



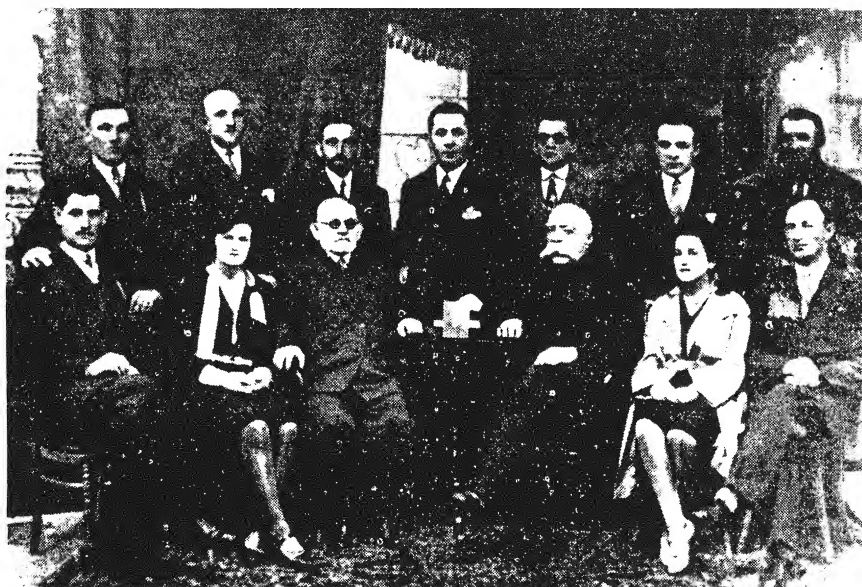
השתתפות יהודי דמבלין ב„חג הים” הפולני (1930)
יידן אין דעמבלין באַטייליקן זיך אינעם פוילישן „יום־טוב פון ים” (1930)

Jews Taking Part in the Polish "National Holiday" in Demblin (1930)
(PAGE 177 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A26



Miriam Shulman, zal
 (PAGE 180 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A27



The Leadership of the "Credit Union"
*(This picture was sent by Chaya Zilberberg who now lives in Canada,
 she is sitting second from the right)*
 (PAGE 186 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A28



המורה יעקב אקהייזר עם תלמידותיו
דער לערער יעקב עקהייזער מיט זיינע שילערניס

The Teacher, Yaacov Ekheiser With His Girl Students
(PAGE 189 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A29



חברי „ברית החייל“ חולקים כבוד אחרון לזלמן וויינאפל ז"ל
חברים פון „ברית החייל“ גיבן אפ דעם לעצטן כבוד דעם פעלדשער וויינאפעל

Comrades of the "Brit Hayil" Pay Their Last Respects to the Folk Healer Vanapol, zal
(PAGE 196 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-A30



ההסתדרות הציונית עם דגלה החדש ליד בית-הכנסת בדמבלין (1934)
 די ציוניסט'ישע ארגאניזאציע מיטן נייעם פאן ביי דער דעמבלינער שול (1934)

The Zionist Organization with its New Flag by the Synagogue in Demblin (1934)

(PAGE 202 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-A31

B.
PERSONALITIES

THREE RABBIS FROM THE MODZJITZ DYNASTY

RABBI YISRAEL, THE ADMOR OF MODZJITZ, AND HIS NIGGUNS

BY M. KIPNIS

Singing has always been the most important element in Hasidic life.

The Hasidic niggunim are always heard in the festivities of the Sabbath and holidays. They always express profound, limitless elation, happiness, agony and hope. The niggunim testify to the fact that singing became the utmost element of the Hasidic world.

It would be more accurate to say that Hasidic singing is a result of the Hasidims' religious flame, their devotion and enthusiasm, and from the Hasidic way of thinking. Therefore, their unique niggunim are one hundred percent Jewish, while the other forms of Jewish singing are questioned by critics and musicologists.

Who are the creators of the Hasidic niggunim?

They are not highly-educated composers, not just players and not theorists. They are also not those composers who add one note to another to create a song.

[See PHOTO-B32 at the end of Section B]

The source of the Hasidic niggun is in the Hasidic ecstasy, their devotion to the limitless highness. This infinite momentum is what created the Hasidic niggun, and therefore the song stands out in its power and attraction. This is why it makes such an exotic impression on them.

The Hasidic niggun is not technical. Its creator was and is the simple, God-fearing Hasid who knows nothing about sheet music, rhythm and scale. However, he has a feeling heart and a poetic soul, and these two are not susceptible to foreign influence.

Primitive niggun creators such as these have always been in all tzaddik dynasties.

There is no need to go through the entire history of tzaddik dynasties from sixty or eighty years ago or before, who probably had their own permanent singers to prepare for their Rabbi, songs for the Sabbath and the holidays. I know very well, as thousands of others do, names of niggun creators who worked in the near past at the Hasidic communities of Wohlin and the Kiev district as well as throughout Southern Russia.

It would suffice to mention Reb Yosef Metalna, Reb Dan, Avraham Leib Gabay of Hornostopol and others who enriched the Chernobil Hasidim with plenty of Hasidic music, which became famous and is sung today in every Jewish place and home.

However, history also tells us of many tzaddikim who obtained an important place in the Hasidic music. We know that the Tzaddik of Rizhin composed niggunim himself. A niggun that was composed by the Rabbi of Liadi was arranged by various musicians to be played by piano, violin and viola. He had other sects, religious and Hasidic, that composed unique niggunim that were distinct from those composed by other Hasidic courts. We know very well about the distinctive tone and color of Chabad's nigguns.

In the world of Hasidic nigguns, especially well known are the tunes by Reb Ahron Hagadol of Kerlin, which are prayer songs. The niggunim that he composed for the Passover Haggadah have an extraordinary dramatic power. Every sentence carries weight and profound content. The Tzaddik of Kerlin, in the eyes of Hasidim, is comparable only to Wagner in the eyes of the Germans. He developed the lyrics in the Hasidic niggun to a degree of a dramatic play.

The Polish Hasidim did not stay far behind Wohlin. There is a well known difference in the quality. In quantity, the Polish Hasidim are just as fluent as the Wohlin's, and it's possible that the Hasidic courts in Galicia and Romania were more gifted with imagination.

There were a few tzaddiks who converted foreign melodies into Judaism, wrapped them with Hasidic garb, added to them a great idea filled with mystery, until the old melody transformed from its crude form and adopted a new, holy form, to be sung in the twilight hours of the Sabbath.

It seems that for the Polish tzaddiks, singing was one way of devotion and worshipping the creator.

Rabbi Yisrael of Modzjitz was the only one of Poland's tzaddiks that based all worship solely on nigguns. He created nigguns by himself, sang them by himself, and distributed them among his Hasidim through Poland's cities and towns.

B

As mentioned earlier, nigguns have always been an instrument for expressing Hasidic ecstasy, and one of the important elements of Hasidic life.

The Rabbi's court has always been the conductor of the Hasidic niggun. Around the court the Hasidim concentrated, and their devotion gave birth to the niggun, which inspired the court's singers.

Indeed, while in the rest of the Hasidic courts the singing was just one way of worship, the Modzjitz Hasidim regarded it as a work into itself.

Rabbi Yisrael, the Admor of Modzjitz, served as the high priest in leading this work. He himself composed the niggunim, he himself sang them, and he himself distributed them among his thousands of Hasidim.

The most interesting is: The Admor did not know the shape of a musical note. Modzjitz's niggunim were not published anywhere, but nevertheless were known among thousands of Hasidim. They were distributed by word of mouth with great accuracy, as sung by the Rabbi, and were given to the Hasidim with the explicit order to sing them as he did. Every note was considered sacred. Every nuance considered sacred legacy containing valuable hints and secrets.

The niggun legacy that the Admor of Modzjitz left his Hasidim is not small. It contains prayer melodies, song melodies and also imagined niggunim for every occasion. Among Hasidic circles, the "homeless niggun" is famous. The Rabbi composed it during the World War [first], when he was in Warsaw, when hunger and distress plagued the thousands of refugees who arrived in Warsaw looking for shelter and peace during the German attacks. This niggun is shrouded with legends. There are those who call it the "peace and war niggun". Some say the Rabbi composed it when Emperor Wilhelm offered peace to England and France. Others call it "Song for David", because the Rabbi used the melody to sing the Song of David on every Sabbath's meal.

The niggunim of the Admor of Modzjitz should not be presented as a new style of Hasidic songs. But many of the Modzjitz nigguns have a special movement, unique to Modzjitz. Not everyone can sing the niggunim in the same way that the Rabbi, in his profound and patriarchal authority, meant them to be sung. His version expresses heart break, sorrow and the Diaspora, endless compassion. The Homeless Niggun, which can be superior material for a large orchestra, expresses both joy and sorrow.

Modzjitz's niggunim are not an exception in the Polish Hasidic tradition, which expresses in song an upbeat movement, as if the orchestra was playing an upbeat military marching song. Such marching niggunim are sung to date in Hasidic homes at the time of *havdalah* [prayer at the end of the Sabbath], expressing a shift of mood from the third meal. However, a special color and magic characterizes the Modzjitz marching nigguns. After each group of rhythmic melodies, an admoric tone is felt. The march is interlaced with admoric notes and sounds.

This characterizes also the Azkara niggun, or the 32-Link Niggun, which is widely known among all Polish Hasidim, and also is wrapped with lots of legends and stories.

According to Hasidim, this niggun was composed in 1913 in Berlin, when the Rabbi was undergoing surgery by Prof. Yisrael. It is told that after the professor operated on

his foot, the Rabbi awakened and watched the city's majestic castles. He began to hum: "I shall remember God and sing, when seeing every city is built." By creating a melody to this verse, he calmed his pains.

The reason for the influence of the general Western music on his large creations can be found also in the fact that the Admor of Modzjitz liked the outdoors. It is said that once he preferred to ride in a horse-drawn carriage from Modzjitz to a nearby town rather than take the train. He wanted to watch God's greatness in nature. Hasidim tell that once when he rode in the forest, he heard a shepherd singing. He ordered the wagon driver to stop, listened to the singing, and ordered the wagon driver to go on. When he saw the puzzlement among his companions, he told them:

"You wonder why I stopped to listen to the singer? Wonder no more. When a person hums a melody, he confesses, and when a person confesses, he deserves to be heard. There is no difference who the confessor is, as long as he is a person..."

Such attitude to a person's singing soul should be attributed to a very high grade.

This Admor's perception of singing is characteristic, and no less interesting.

C

According to my research with old Hasidim and those close to the Tzaddik of Modzjitz, it seems that he inherited his talent for singing.

He was born in 1849 in Ratzionz to his father Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, the Admor of Zvolin, who was a great singer and sang much with his pleasant voice. His grandfather was the famous Admor Rabbi Yichzakelah of Kuzmiere, who also was a singer and a great fan of music.

The grandson developed his singing talent since early childhood. When he was still a child he composed niggunim, but was unable to write them and therefore memorized them. He conducted services when still a boy and everyone who heard him was puzzled. When he was fourteen, he married a wife from Ozsharov and became the son in-law of the then Hasid and rich man Reb Chaim Saul Friedman, who had a reputation as one of the great singers and prayers in Poland. Young Rabbi Yisrael was supported by him for fifteen years, during which he was totally devoted to Torah studies and singing. When it became time for him to earn a living, his father in-law made him a merchant. But he neglected trade and devoted his time solely to singing. He spent days and nights with songs and niggunim as well as music. At that time he received the book *Menatzeyah Bingginot* [Conductor of Melodies] by Zvi Nissan Golumb of Vilna, and from it he learned everything that was to be learned about general music. By reading the book he learned that there existed a special script for writing music as well as a scale: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti. This was enough for him to

understand fully the theory of music, all in his Hasidic way. Of course, he could not learn to read and write sheet music from Golumb's book, but he had a complete understanding of music. Then he spent much time writing his books *Klalei Deoraita* [Rules of the Torah] and *Divrei Yisrael* [Issues of Israel], which were published later. On the verse "*K'chu mizimrat ha'aretz*" [Take from the Land's Songs], from the Torah, he wrote a long article on music in kabala, in which he connected the seven basic musical note to the seven days of Genesis, to the seven planets, etc., and tried to develop the complex Hasidic idea that is known to just a few. There he touched upon the octave: that the matter is not simple; that there are seven voices in the universe, and the voices go up one by one gradually, and when they reached the eighth tone, a new octave begins with the last tone of the former octave. From this he had a moral: when man is uplifted to the highest step of greatness, he must still remember the first note, the first day, when he was humble...

His father, the Admor of Zvolin, died in 1888, and Rabbi Yisrael was immediately called to replace him. He lived in Zvolin for one year, and one year later was admitted as Rabbi and Admor of the city of Ivangorod, today's Demblin, which is called Modzjitz by Hasidim to this day. The Hasidim bought him a luxurious mansion with a wonderful garden, and since then his songs were known in Poland as Modzjitz's nigguns. The mansion became a temple for the work of Hasidic niggunim. Every niggun that the Rabbi composed was received as sacred among the Hasidim. All admoric courts demanded from their singers to sing only Modzjitz's nigguns.

The Admor of Modzjitz was distinct among other Polish admors not just by his great singing power, but also by his behavior.

He received his Hasidim only in late hours. Warsaw Hasidim took that into account and arranged trips to arrive there late at night. They would arrive with their pieces of paper. The Rabbi would receive his Hasidim until three o'clock in the morning. In summers, when dawn was breaking, he would open the window after his sessions with the Hasidim, gaze at the garden, concentrate and hum several musical motives in silence. At that time, according to Hasidim, he was totally absorbed in the world of music. Indeed, all his tunes were composed at dawn. He would repeat the tunes during the day to his son, Yechiel Alter, who was also musically talented, and his son would distribute the songs among the Hasidim.

Hardly a day passed without his composing a new niggun. If he was unable to, he would be sad. One day he told his family, "Too bad. Today I lost some profound ideas on niggunim."

Except for the 32-verse niggun Azkara, Niggun for the Homeless and Song of David, which I noted earlier, Hasidic circles know well his tunes for *Shma' Kolenu* [Hear Our Voice], *Omnam Ken* [Yes Indeed], and especially *Kol Ma'aminim* [All the Believers]. In this last song, he sang every verse with a different melody.

He became very famous not only as a composer, but also as a singer and service conductor. The Hasidim tell wonders about the prayer services that he conducted. He had a strong tenor and a wonderful trill. When he vibrated the middle notes, the walls trembled. His uniqueness was that he did not have to correct himself and repeat the same word (perhaps he should be a model for his other prayer services). He used to criticize hazzanim for pulling their voices and pausing in mid word. He used to say that they break the word because they had not grasped the idea.

Singing was so important to him that he used to compose a special melody for every wedding in his family. When the Rabbi's wife complained that she had not yet completed the preparations, he would say: As far as I'm concerned, there is not problem. I already have a niggun.

In this manner the Admor shepherded his congregation for more than twenty years.

Before the war he became ill with his leg and was forced to travel to Prof. Yisrael in Berlin for surgery. Before the trip, a few admors came to bid him farewell. The Admor of Mamshinov told him, "Only on behalf of your singing, which brought back to Israel thousands of people, God shall give you health."

During the war he lived in Warsaw and was seriously ill. But he was never weak. Hasidim say that only three years ago, when Dr. Cherkovski put a pad on his ill foot and cut in the live flesh, the Rabbi would hum a tune. Cherkovski once told him, "Mr. Rabbi! I've just told something to a cabinet minister. I cut in his live flesh and he cried bitterly. I told him: Shame on you. I have here an old Rabbi, and when I cut his foot, he sings, and you, minister, cry..."

Singing did not leave him even in his last hours.

Before the second surgery to amputate his foot, in the middle of the night, he ordered that candles be lit and that his family gather around him. When they came to his room, he stood up on the bed and said, "I don't see that it is possible for me to conduct services any more. My prayers and songs are not something out of hand. I would like to repeat all my niggunim the way I did them, without any mistakes."

Because he was weak, he ordered his young son to sing all the prayers on the spot. Where he made a mistake, the Rabbi motioned with his hand, interrupted him and corrected the tune.

In this way his son repeated all his prayers and songs, including those of the high holidays.

Two days later, the Admor passed away. It was in *Kislev* [about December] 1921, in Warsaw.

The Admor of Modzjitz was, if not one of the original creators of Hasidic music, then one of the major builders of the Hasidic music in Poland.

D

THE POWER OF MODZJITZ'S NIGGUNS (An Interesting Story I've Heard from Hasidim)

The Admor of Modzjitz was especially good when singing at the last meal of the Sabbath. On the Sabbath eves and mornings he would let one of his sons or Hasidim sing. For the third meal, he sang himself, including *Bnei Hechala*, *Yedid Nefesh* and *Mizmor Ledavid* and other songs from his imagination. Usually he sang by himself. The Hasidim listened to him intently, capturing every nuance.

Except for the Hasidim who always filled the Rabbi's beit hamidrash, there were always many people outside, including non-Hasidim, who listened to the Rabbi's singing.

In Fort Ivangorod near the town, a military conductor, a senior officer, conducted the battalion's large band. Nobody in town knew that he was Jewish, and he did not tell his secret to anyone. He did not look Jewish. He was from the Tomsk district.

Once, at the time of the third the Sabbath meal, the conductor walked nearby and heard from the distance a strange music. He stood near the window with the people outside. But the longer he listened to the Rabbi's singing, the more he became attracted to it. When it became dark, he entered beit hamidrash, stood at the corner and listened ever more intently, unable to leave.

When candles were lit, he was seen standing at the corner. The hall was abuzz: the fort's conductor was standing in a corner of the synagogue!

The conductor walked to the table and asked to approach the Rabbi.

The Rabbi agreed to speak to him after the havdalah, at the Rabbi's residence.

Immediately after the havdalah, when the conductor was asked to come in to the Rabbi, he came to the Rabbi with tears in his eyes, "Rabbi, I am from far away in Russia. My parents were Jewish, but all my brothers became Christians, and I myself has already forgotten that I'm Jewish. But the Rabbi's singing awakened my Jewish soul. The more I concentrated on the Rabbi's singing, the more my Jewish identity became alive. Rabbi! I shall not leave this place. I need help, counseling, so I can feel Jewish from now on. I want to remain Jewish." As he spoke, his eyes filled with tears.

The Rabbi comforted him and asked if the conductor still remembered a word in Hebrew, from a prayer or from the Torah.

"I forgot all, Rabbi," answered the conductor in tears. "I remember only a few words that a teacher taught me in my childhood. I can only say *baruch ata* [blessed are you], and that is all."

"Go then home, and every morning, after rising, say several times *baruch ata*, and come back here in a few days."

The conductor went home, spirited up. After two days he returned to the Rabbi with his wife.

"Rabbi," he said. "I did as you ordered. I repeated the words *baruch ata* in Hebrew, and so did my wife. Now I want the Rabbi to tell me something else."

The Rabbi asked him to come closer, and agreed with him that from then on, he should observe the Sabbath, and that his wife would not cook on the Sabbath but on Friday. He himself should not ride his bicycle to the orchestra as usual, but walk instead. And that in general, he should try as much as possible to observe the Sabbath when off duty.

The conductor promised to obey, and began slowly to act like a Jew. His wife would light candles on the Sabbath eves, despite the fact that they lived with gentile officers in the fortress. She would draw the curtains so they could not see.

Thus the conductor became one of the regular visitors to the Rabbi's court. He would come every the Sabbath to hear the Rabbi sing during the third meal. He also used the Rabbi's tunes for his band. His band played in all the festivities and receptions for the army officers who would often come from St. Petersburg and Warsaw to visit the fort.

Passover drew near, and the conductor intended to observe the holiday lawfully. He asked the Rabbi about every detail, and what he was told he kept sacred. Regardless of the fact that he lived in the fort with gentile officers, he observed Passover, including the mitzvah of eating matzoth. He kept a servant at his home, who was a Christian soldier, and he was not allowed to eat hametz in his home.

Once, when the conductor ordered his servant to eat his bread in the hallway, an officer passed by and saw the soldier eating there. "Why are you eating outside," he asked the soldier.

"I was thrown out of the house, because I am eating bread. The conductor eats matzoth like the rest of the Jews."

"What?" asked the officer. "The conductor is a Jew who throws his Pravoslav soldiers out of the house?" The event upset all the officers in the fort.

After three days, the conductor received a letter from the battalion commander, in which he was told that he should leave the fort in two weeks, and that he was allowed to look for another job.

After receiving the letter, the conductor ran to the Rabbi and told him about the situation. He also told him that he was teaching the battalion commander how to play the viola. He asked if he should still go to teach him, despite his being fired.

The Rabbi advised him to give the lesson to the commander as usual, and to ask him during the lesson to explain the reason for his firing.

So he did.

When he was seen at the door, the commander shouted at him: "How dare you come to me? You must know the rage that you caused for being Jewish and eating matzoth, and throwing out the servant soldier during a Pravoslav holiday, without letting him eat at the kitchen."

"Please, commander, let me say my words."

"Well, say what you have."

The conductor told him his life story, that he was born Jewish and almost forgot his Jewishness. But that he once walked by the Rabbi's synagogue and heard him sing, and thus was transformed. And that since then, he was influenced by the Rabbi to a degree that he feels like a real Jew, observing the law and unable to act otherwise.

"Is it true that the Rabbi's singing persuaded you to return to your Jewishness?" the commander asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Then I would like to hear it myself," said the commander.

"I shall play the Rabbi's tunes for you with the violin, if you agree," said the conductor.

The conductor took the commander's violin and played on it the Rabbi's songs including all the Hasidic nuances and wrinkles and all their soul searching.

The commander listened intently. After the conductor finished the playing, the commander went to his desk, opened a drawer, took out a sheet of paper, and said:

"Look," said the commander. "This is the report of your dismissal which I wrote today to the authorities. I am tearing it in front of you. The Rabbi's music is indeed majestic and religious, and can influence also those who are not Jews. It also touched me, and I am Christian, by its enchanting beauty. Do not worry. You are to continue your work as a conductor. And I would like to know this Rabbi."

The conductor remained at his job. He would often be seen with the commander walking by *beit hamidrash*, both listening to the Rabbi singing *bnei hechala* and *yedid nefesh*.

The conductor continued to behave privately as a complete Jew, under the commander's protection, without fear. When his wife gave birth to a son, ten Jews were called to the fortress. The Rabbi was the godfather and a mezuzah was affixed on the door.

The commander himself became a great fan of the Rabbi's music. When the Rabbi celebrated his grandson's marriage, and the conductor asked the commander to allow the military band to play all night at the Rabbi's, the commander answered, "Not only that I allow the band to play all night, but I will come to the wedding myself."

Indeed, the military band with the commander and the conductor came late in the afternoon to the Rabbi's court. It played marching tunes and many of the Rabbi's tunes.

To keep the peace among the thousands of visitors, the commander summoned his Cossack soldiers from the fort...

And so the little town of Modzjitz, by Fort Ivangorod, enjoyed the goodness of the Rabbi's music until the Great World War broke out.

By M. Kipnis

(From the book, Hymn to the Hasidim, edited by M. S. Geshuri, Jerusalem, 1936)

THE LIFE, CREATION AND DEATH OF THE MODZJITZER RABBI, RABBI SAUL TAUB

BY SHMUEL ROTSTEIN

The Modzjitzer Rabbi was one of the three greatest Polish Rabbis, who, through a miracle, was able to survive the Hitler massacre. The Rabbis who were able to survive were the Modzjitzer Rabbi and the Amshinover Rabbi, Simone Kalish.

The death of the Modzjitzer Rabbi occurred on the historic day of November 29, 1947, when the United Nations, with a majority vote, created the State of Israel. The Rabbi, who was unusually devoted to the land of Zion, had visited Israel 5 times. But he, a religious authority, who, with a lot of energy had worked for the creation of the state of Israel, did not, however, live to take part in the celebration which surrounded the great day when the State was declared. He did, however, have the honor to be buried in Israel.

[See PHOTO-B33 at the end of Section B]

Among the religious Jews in Israel the celebration of the 29th of November was considerably diminished because of the death of this saint who was extremely popular there and had thousands of devoted supporters. "For wickedness the righteous perished". Enough Jewish blood has been spilled in the Holy Land since that day.

The life journey of the Modzjitzer Rabbi would provide enough material for a tremendous biographical work. He went through a lot in his stormy life and more than once he drank from the cup of sorrow. He was, however, a man with a very strong spirit, full of spiritual strength, resolution and faith. He was deeply rooted in the Hasidism of Kuzmiere. He believed in the words of his grandfather, Rabbi Yechizkale of Kuzmiere, that even when something really tragic befalls you, this kind of blow can be worked into a fabric of mercy which will give a person the required strength and courage to bear out the sentence that life has given him. In this he believed the person who receives this kind of sentence receives strength to bear it out. "Blessed be he who is sentenced and persecuted" - this had influence over him and helped him to remain courageous and spiritually fresh, and from every sorrow that he lived through, a new melody was produced.

He was born on the 7th day of *Succoth* [the day upon which every man's fate is sealed in heaven], in the *Hebrew Year 5649* [Common Era 1889], to his father Reb Yisrael, the first Modzjitzer Rabbi, the son of the old Zvoliner Rabbi, Reb Shmuel Eliyahu, and grandson of the famous Rabbi Yichzakelah of Kuzmiere, one of the greatest Hasidic teachers in Poland.

His father, Rabbi Yisrael, was a famous Hasidic personality who had thousands of supporters and followers. His books, "Articles of Israel", about the Torah, "Laws of the Torah", and others, were very popular, but the thing that really made him the most famous, was his songs which were distinguished for their originality and composed in an oriental style. Every song of the Modzjitzer is a prayer which brings forth from the person that which one is unable to put into words. The older Modzjitzer Rabbi, who never left the town, had never heard any modern music and the famous musicians and composers, with their immortal creations, were very strange to him; he didn't have anything to do with them. Given all of this, everybody wondered at how he was able to create with such artistry. In hindsight he was truly a quite phenomenal person.

Hasidim recount a whole list of documented incidents in which the elder Modzjitzer was able, through the power of his music, to bring them back to their spiritual roots, their Jewishness, these stumbling souls that were wandering, who later became true and very devoted religious Jews.

To the group of his famous creations belongs the "Askara" [*I Shall Remember*], which went through a variety of changes and transformations until it came to its final form in Berlin, during an operation on the Rabbi's foot by the famous Dr. Israelis, and the homeless melody, a psalm of David, which he composed during the First World War. The Askara is a very complicated composition, it's very seldom that it can be sung to do it justice. The Modzjitzer's Rabbi eldest son had for a short time made a short trip to Israel and he began to work on this composition as if he had a premonition that his days were numbered. He was though, the only person who was really capable to properly sing the "Askara".

The elder Modzjitzer died in Warsaw in the *Hebrew Year 5681* [Common Era 1921]. At that time he designated his son Saul his successor, who had already held numerous Rabbinical posts in Poland. He was also a successor to his father in that he was someone who composed music himself, with comparable skill in his father's stead.

When he was very young, he had already become a Rabbi in Rakov near Kielitz. An individual with great energy, he undertook an enormous amount of activity on behalf of the community. From there he left and became a Rabbi in Kartchev near Otvotzk and at the request of his Hasidim he settled down in the renowned place at Otvotzk, near Warsaw, where he established his court.

The Modzjitzer Rabbi was engaged intellectually in both the study of things that are manifest and apparent as well as in the study of things that are hidden, both day and night. His Torah commentaries were distinguished for a variety of reasons, sharpness of mind and expertise, hints and *gimatriyas* [calculating the sum of letters in words so they can be compared with other words, for associating]. His writings were, however, destroyed in Poland, and this fact has

been much lamented. Among his lost writings was a research monograph about his grandfather, the elder Kuzmierer wise man. He had worked on that project for many years. He was a very skilled writer. What he wrote was distinguished in both style and form. Only a little bit of his writing was published as a supplement to the "Articles of Israel" of his father's. An interpretation of the Haggadah from Passover entitled "Ashy Yisrael" and seven notebooks of his Torah commentaries and Torah sermons of his forebears with a great portion of notes of the Modzjitzer music, were published in New York with the name "The Glory of Yisrael", while he was residing in New York.

Of course, when we consider the actual publishing of the Modzjitzer we should remember the strength of his musical creation. He possessed a very rare musical talent. He was able to know all of the events of daily life including things in his private life and give to them a musical interpretation. Thousands of songs, including operas, marches, waltzes, dances, verses and prayers found their way into his melodies he composed. They were quickly spread abroad and sung by all classes of people throughout the whole Jewish world.

His court in Otvotzk was very popular in Poland. Thousands and thousands used to come on the high holidays and other holidays in order to hear his songs and prayers. Extra trains were supplied by the Polish rail authorities for the followers of the Modzjitzer Rabbi.

There, in Otvotzk, he founded a yeshiva where 50 students studied Torah under the guidance of famous Torah scholars. The students, every month, produced a journal with their writings about the Torah.

As has been said already, the Modzjitzer Rabbi was distinguished for his very close bond to Palestine. As soon as the First World War ended, he went there. He was warmly received by greatest Rabbis, the then High Commissioner Herbert Samuel and he prayed in the Ruins of Rabbi Yehuda the Hasid synagogue. Afterwards, the High Commissioner invited him to the palace and they formed a life long friendship.

After the first visit to Israel his bond to the land became even stronger. The melodies and songs that he composed in Israel were very important to him. From time to time he would revisit there and each time his arrival and his presence became a very important event for the community. In order to establish a firm position for himself in Israel 14 years ago, he established his eldest son, his substitute Admor, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu *Shlita* [acronym for "may live long, good life"] who lives in Tel Aviv and until the death of his father was a member of the Tel Aviv Rabbinate. The Rabbi himself before the outbreak of the Second World War had made plans to settle in Israel, but the world catastrophe wrecked his plans.

When the war broke out, he was one of the first to be able to flee. He sent word to all of the Rabbis who were in Otvotzk, but only one of them was able to respond and in so doing save him, that was the Ameshinover Rabbi.

He endured a great deal on a long road of exile. He never ceased to tell the Hasidim what the Lord had done with him until he arrived in Vilna, and there in Lithuania, which had a reputation for its scholarship and antipathy for the Hasidim, he once again established his court which attracted not only Hasidic refugees from Poland but also Lithuanian scholars, who had begun to hum his melodies. The Modzjitzer Rabbi was invited to a variety of Lithuanian towns, like Kovne, Shavel, Ponevetch. Everywhere he came, his presence was an event of the highest order.

The Modzjitzer Rabbi was the first who left the Soviet Union by way of Japan to America and in so doing, he created an escape route for thousands. It was not just that he was able to succeed in persuading the Soviet authorities to give him permission to travel in this way and to leave the Soviet Union, but in so doing, he broke the lock of the borders. He was the messenger of good deeds who was able to break the Chinese wall which a president was able to do later. He was the first European Jew to arrive in Kove, in Japan, where he found a community of 12 Jewish families. He prepared them for a stream of refugees who would need to arrive in their land and would need to get a lot of help.

In 1940, the Modzjitzer Rabbi came to New York and settled in Brooklyn, in Williamsburg, and started a center for Torah Hasidic music. From time to time, he used to visit Jewish centers in the United States and Canada. Everywhere that he visited, it was an event of the highest order. He was able to wake the sleeping spiritual strength, to renew the spiritual inclination, the desire to do good deeds and the desire to study Torah. The number of his friends grew and included people from all walks of life and circles.

His longing for Palestine, which was a piece of his soul, didn't let him rest. The decision that he had made before the War, to go to Israel and settle there, to build a new center for Hasidic studies, constantly drove him and reminded him until he left his house and family. In the month of *Tamuz* [June-July] in the *Hebrew Year 5707* [Common Era 1947], he came to Palestine.

His friends and followers enthusiastically welcomed him at the airport in Lod, where there were gathered hundreds of people, among them respected Rabbis and Hasidim who welcomed the Modzjitzer Rabbi with a Modzjitzer march and dancing. He stayed in Tel Aviv for several weeks where he lived with his son, the present Rabbi, and held forth at a table in the Talmud Study Hall, with the attendance of hundreds and thousands of people. When he used to go out of his dwelling to this Talmud Study Hall, hundreds of his followers would accompany him through the streets of Tel Aviv, with song and with joy. He himself, the Rabbi, was in a very joyous mood, and he composed new melodies and gave a lot of commentaries and

was inspired by the fact that the day was coming closer when Palestine would be in our hands.

His hit songs were the melody which he composed on "Simcha LeTzach" and the very heart felt composition that was composed to the prayer, "Joy for your Land". "He acted not for our sake but for yours, and do not destroy the memory of our remnants."

He also spent several weeks in Jerusalem where the same enthusiasm that had greeted him in Tel Aviv was evident and afterwards, Haifa and Petach-Tikva. Hasidim even bought a sight in which to build the Rabbi's court in Ramat-Gan, near Tel Aviv, but the sickness which had long been nesting in him suddenly showed itself in a very stark form. He became weaker by the day, but nobody, even the doctors, believed that his days were numbered. The preparations were underway for the high holy days, where he was going to pray in one of the greatest synagogues. But later he wasn't up to it and instead his son stood in for him and prayed at the ceremony, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu *Shlita*, from which the Rabbi had great pleasure. His crown is given to his son.

He felt better on Succoth. The last day that he held forth before an audience was at a banquet, on the first day of Succoth. It took all day until the evening, together with *Simchat Bet Hashuvah* [a ritual of the second holiday of Succoth], the whole thing lasted more than 8 hours. The Rabbi gave a lot of Torah commentary and sang with great spirit as if he had a premonition that this would be the last time.

After the holidays his sickness became worse. He lost the ability to speak, but his mind was very clear up to the last moment. He would kind of hum to himself the sounds of his melodies which he wasn't really able to actually sing out. He did that until he died, in a day of general celebration for the creation of the State of Israel.

At his open grave, his son Shmuel Eliyahu Taub was present, and he noted the great virtues of his father. In spite of his arrogance in the Torah, he nevertheless continued the tradition of Modzjitz as both a composer and a religious scholar.

HASIDIC SONGS OF THE MODZJITZER RABBI

"A song which comes from the heart, sings itself"

At the address 36 Dizengof street in Tel Aviv, one sees Friday evenings groups of Jews standing around, young people, and the stitched woolen yarmulkes look like little flat Matzos on the heads of the yeshiva students, with long curled payes, and they are singing Hasidic melodies.

This is the Hasidim who have left the Modzjitzer Rabbi's table and they've heard new Hasidic melodies which the Rabbi himself, Reb Shmuel Eliyahu Taub, had composed.

Modzjitzer melodies are famous throughout Israel. One hears them sung everywhere, on the radio station, Voice of Israel, on the Kibbutzes, and in various Hasidic communities.

The present Modzjitzer Rabbi has inherited the path of his father and grandfather.

His grandfather, the Modzjitzer Rabbi Reb Yisrael, was the author of hundreds of Hasidic melodies. His son, the present Rabbi's father, Reb Saul Taub, was also the author of a great number of songs.

Interesting: The elder Modzjitzer Rabbi didn't know any musical notations. Also, the present Modzjitzer can't write or read musical notations. But still, he's the author of a melody, usually before dawn, when he walks back and forth on the balcony of his house. Then, when the inhabitants of Tel Aviv are still asleep, the present Modzjitzer Rabbi shuffles around, hums, repeats it. He repeats it a few times, when the Hasidim arrive a little bit later to begin praying, there's already been a brand new melody produced, because song, in the thinking of the Modzjitzer Rabbis, comes straight from the heart.

And that's exactly how the former Modzjitzer Rabbi described it in his book, "Sayings of Saul", which the present Rabbi published. A Jew asked the Modzjitzer Rabbi how it was that he created a song.

[See PHOTO-B34 at the end of Section B]

"It's brought forth in this book - Sayings of Saul", the Rabbi answered, "with a word from the Rabbi Reb Yichzakelah of Kuzmiere: Words that leave the heart enter the heart". Meaning, *"words which emerge from a heart that's full, these words enter the heart."*

In this way, the Modzjitzer Rabbi, when the heart was full, would come forth with a song. As for instance in the song, "Then he shall sing", said Rashi: "A song ascended to his heart". Moses, his heart transcended itself to sing. He wanted to sing, he began to sing, and a melody which comes from the heart doesn't need to be noted down, it sings by itself.

Hasidim and other young people come to the Rabbi's table for the Sabbath meal. The Dizengof street on the Sabbath, towards evening, is filled with strolling Jews, young people, and girls, and they are all hurrying along to the "Dizengof Square", there, as soon as the Sabbath is officially over, one can play around and have fun. The street is very, very narrow, people are hanging around after the Sabbath is over, waiting for the movie theaters to open, which are closed on the Sabbath, and concentrated around "Dizengof Square". Others hurry along to the other side of Dizengoff street, where they will hear a concert at the Talmud Study Center, of a great musical artist. Here, on the same side of the street, No. 36, the Hasidim hurry along in the darkness, in order to hear the melodies of the Modzjitzer Rabbi.

You can hear very sweet tones coming out of the synagogue, which is "*Djir Anpin*" - Hasidim are humming under their breath, they're in a very holy Sabbath mood. Nobody wants the Sabbath to be over, and the songs of the Modzjitzer Rabbi just seem to reach deep down into every part of you. There's something so luminous and melodic that it seems like you can become part of the melody yourself.

The dynasty of Modzjitzer Rabbis originates with Rabbi Yichzakelah from Kuzmiere, who said, "On a Sabbath that doesn't have any melodies, you can't really feel the true taste of the Sabbath."

The melody for Azkara, is well known in the Hasidic world, and it was composed by the Modzjitzer Rabbi, Reb Yisrael.

Hasidim tell that when a Modzjitzer Hasid used to come to the Ostrovetzer Rabbi, Reb Meir Yichael, he would tell the Hasid to sing the Askara, and tears would run from his eyes when he heard it.

After the death of the Modzjitzer Rabbi, the Ostrovetzer Rabbi said that "the Modzjitzer Rabbi should be envied because he left the world a very valuable treasure, his melodies."

And when he said that, the Ostrov Hasidim who were gathered around him were stunned and they asked him, "Rabbi, what do you mean by that?"

And he replied in a very simple, unpretentious way, "From my teaching, the Jews don't receive any spiritual awakening, but from the Modzjitzer Rabbi's melodies,

every Jew is so inspired and so moved, that they're moved to atone and to do penance in a positive way."

And the previous Modzjitzer Rabbi, Reb Saul, deals with this actually in his book, "Amrai Saul", and that the real goal and importance of the melodies was to be able to rouse people on a spiritual level and really stir them so that they would be willing to do penance and atone; for it not just to be an aesthetic experience, but also a moral one.

A Hasid asked the Rabbi, how was it possible that with book it describes rules of conduct and how you should act and how you should be punished, if you don't act properly?

"You don't move people to act properly". He gave a little fable as a reply and it goes like this:

A Jew from the countryside who owned a mill once came into town and he went into a watch maker's store. He'd seen a variety of watches and clocks in the window, and among them was a little alarm clock that wakes people up from sleep.

This country Jew went into the watch maker's shop and said that he wanted to buy the little alarm clock.

So they talked for awhile, and the watch maker came to understand that this guy in the countryside had a mill, and he asked the mill owner, "What do you need an alarm clock for? You've got big hands on your mill and they're turning all the time, and they make a lot of noise, and you mean to tell me that they can't wake you up? And a little alarm clock is going to wake you up, with all the noise that it makes?

And the man from the countryside answered, "The way human beings are, that which you get accustomed to you don't even hear it, if you hear the wheels of the windmill going day and night, you become like me, you don't even notice it anymore. But the thin little ring of the alarm clock, now that would definitely wake me up from sleep." "Now, the same thing applies with melodies", the Modzjitzer Rabbi said, "you have your holy books with their rules of conduct and how you should behave, and they stay right on the book shelf or the closet, in every Jew's home, and the truth is, you simply don't move them anymore to do anything."

"But, a little Hasidic melody, with a song that comes right from the heart, however small that sound is, can awake somebody, and awake them to their depths, and awake them to moral action."

The Modzjitzer Hasidim themselves were very great singers. They would never let the Rabbi himself just go ahead and sing a song, but they would always join in and sing with him.

The Rabbi Yichzakela from Kuzmiere said that it's a good deed when you see someone carrying a heavy burden to give them a hand and help them along "You shall indeed help him", and the same thing applies when somebody is singing a melody.

A song is needed only for heaven's sake, the Rabbi Yichzakela from Kuzmiere used to teach. Hasidim tell that his son, the Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, the Rabbi in Zvolin, was a great singer. At one point he suddenly stopped singing because a Jew dare not have such intense pleasure in the world.

The Hasidim came in to the Rabbi when he had stopped singing so suddenly and asked him why he did that and he answered, "I am just too ecstatic from the singing here, and I thought that a Jew just dare not have so much fun in the world."

The son of the Zvoliner Rabbi, Rabbi Yisrael Taub, the first Modzjitzer Rabbi, set his course for Hasidic study and teaching with song and melody as a very major vehicle.

This approach was inherited by his son, Reb Saul, who, during the Second World War lived in New York, after he'd escaped alive from the Nazis in Russia and Japan.

The Modzjitzer Rabbi in New York created a great number of Hasidic melodies. In the year 1947, for the fourth time he traveled to Palestine with the intention of settling there and that's where, since before the Second World War, his son had lived, Reb Shmuel Eliyahu, the present Modzjitzer Rabbi. The Rabbi, however, became very sick quite suddenly and died in Tel Aviv on the 29th of November, 1947, on the day when the United Nations voted in the majority to accept the partition plan of independence. The Modzjitzer Rabbi was still the last Jew who was brought to burial in the Mount of Olives, under hail of Arab bullets.

His son, Reb Shmuel Eliyahu, at the open grave of his father, was crowned his successor.

* * *

The present Rabbi was born in 1906. He got married young and he's a son-in-law of the rich man and scholar in Warsaw, Reb Chaim Moshe Cohen, who descended from a great line of Rabbis.

The present Modzjitzer Rabbi received a teaching permit from the Rabbi of Plonsker, Rabbi Tzvi Yichzakele Michelzon. And when he settled in Tel Aviv in 1935, he founded the first Modzjitzer prayer house in Palestine. He became a member of the religious council of Tel Aviv.

Now, today, Reb Shmuel Eliyahu has become the Rabbi of the Modzjitzer Hasidim, and his only son, Reb Yisrael Dan, has become a member of the religious council in Tel Aviv.

At this point today, there are Modzjitzer Hasidim prayer houses not only in Tel Aviv, but also in Jerusalem and Haifa and there are plans to establish a Modzjitzer yeshiva in Tel Aviv in Bnei-Brak.

The present Modzjitzer Rabbi has created a body of work of 200 songs.

The very loyal Hasid of the Modzjitzer Rabbi, Reb Ben-Tzion Shenker from Brooklyn, sang on a phonograph record the Modzjitzer melodies which made a very strong impression on the musical world. It's interesting that Ben-Tzion Shenker himself is a composer of Hasidic melodies according to the Modzjitzer style. Recently he made a phonograph record of his own songs which have unmistakable Modzjitzer feel to them.

It was a custom in the court of the Modzjitzer Rabbi that his songs inspired the Hasidim to create their own melodies.

Also, the former Modzjitzer Rabbi had in his circle several Hasidim who wrote songs and the Rabbi himself used to sing them at his table. Among the Hasidim who composed, the Warsaw musician, Reb Yidel Aidelzon, is well known and Reb Israel David Fostag. And it's thought that he composed the melody to "Ani Maamin" [*I Believe*], which was sung in various Nazi death camps.

Over 500 songs have been composed by the three Modzjitzer Rabbis.

It would be very worthwhile if these melodies would appear in print and with the appropriate musical notations. They would be a tremendous contribution to the treasure of Hasidic music.

The most important thing to the Modzjitzer Hasidim is the rhythm. Through music, prayer can be brought alive.

A Hasid says to me during Rosh HaShanah service, in the Modzjitzer Rabbi's synagogue on Dizengof street in Tel Aviv as we are sweating along with all of the hundreds of other Hasidim, "The Rabbi's melody goes into your heart, even when you don't feel it. You can go home, wherever you are, that melody that the Rabbi has created goes along with you, and it worms its way into your heart. And

sooner or later you have to start singing it. And you do so with a great deal of spiritual pleasure."

And the Modzjitzer Hasidim asked me to come to Israel after the end of the eighth day of Succoth, and to see how the Modzjitzer conducted the singing to honor the memory of Simcha-Torah, in exile.

After the eighth day of Succoth is over, the Jews come together from Tel Aviv and surrounding communities. The traffic in the surrounding streets is closed off and the Jews dance in the streets to the melodies of the Modzjitzer Rabbi.

Also, the Modzjitzer Rabbi introduced as the sixth prayer, "Helper of the Poor", the song which is dedicated to the six million Jews who were killed by the Nazis and instead of the joyous Modzjitzer melodies, one sings the well known "I Believe", and the melody from the previous Modzjitzer Rabbi who was the author of "Not for our sake".

I, however, wasn't able to respond to the request of the Modzjitzer Hasidim, to keep my promise to witness the joyous ceremony that they invited me to, because, on Simcha-Torah I was already in Krakow, in the synagogue of Ramas, and my heart was full of pain when I saw the situation there. And so, however, once again, on Sabbath, I went to the Sabbath meal at the Modzjitzer and I listened together with hundreds of Hasidim, to the Rabbi sing Hasidic melody to "*Bnei Hechala Dichsifin*" [a niggun].

At the end of the Sabbath, when in Tel Aviv Jews hurry to the performance hall to a modern concert, the Hasidic Jews at the other end of the street of Dizengoff gather at the Modzjitzer Rabbis to usher out the queen of Sabbath and to hear Hasidic melodies.

From Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu of Zvolin, the son of the Kuzmiere Rabbi, these following words came, "It's a big responsibility that a person undertakes who sings a song, because the soul of the person can have a return through this song. What the singer sings, and how he sings a melody, can uplift an individual in the highest, most lofty way and take him down in to the bottom of hell.

The Modzjitzer Rabbi with his singing Hasidic melodies, uplifts the soul of each Jew.

(Illustrated World, number 46, 47, November 15, 1961, November 22, 1961 - Tel Aviv)

FROM MODZJITZ TO DIZENGOF STREET

BY N. BAR-ORYAN

Secularity has settled long ago on this street. The neon lights of Dizengof Street are blinding. Crowds of Tel Avivians swarm the movie theaters to look at the angry face of Marlon Brando or at the anatomy of Brigitte Bardot. Young men and women sit at the cafes at the close of the Sabbath drinking espresso coffee and overfilled ice-cream cups. The buses are jammed with passengers who are on their way to relieve themselves of the heat at the seaside promenade.

But the court of the Admor of Modzjitz at the corner of King George Street is still under the wings of the Sabbath. The longing tunes of "*Bnei Malkha Dichssifin*" are still heard through the windows of the new synagogue. If it were not for the many electric lamps, the modern ventilators and the many young men with the knit yarmulkes, we would think we were at the town of Modzjitz itself. Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu Taub, whose black beard is streaked with silver, sits at the head of the table. He wears a silken blue robe and a fur hat, his eyes closed, totally absorbed in the world of music. The Hasidim, wearing black coats, and some with shirts over their trousers, are seated around the table. Between one niggun and another, they listen to the Torah interpretations and grab the leftovers from the Rabbi's plate. After the sad niggun of *Bnei Hechala*, other songs, upbeat, are sung, such as the Song for David. And then another niggun of melancholy, such as *Yedid Nefesh* and more Torah words and another upbeat song, etc. The clock nears eight, but it's hard to leave the Sabbath and her songs...

*

The gates to the music world of the Modzjitz dynasty were opened by Rabbi Yisrael Taub, may his memory be blessed, grandfather of the present Admor. He composed thousands of niggunim which became famous throughout the world. The story about Rabbi Yisrael, who refused to be anaesthetized before a tough operation, is well known. "I shall hide with my soul in the world of niggun, and you could do with my body what you wish," he told his astonished doctors. Indeed, the Rabbi underwent the surgery without anesthesia, and Rabbi Yisrael did not feel any pain, since during the three hours of the operation, he composed the niggun of Azkara.

His son, Rabbi Saul Yedidia, may his memory be blessed, father of Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, inherited his father's talent. In the opinion of researchers of Hasidic music, he even outdid his father's composition talent; in addition to his originality, he developed a sense for modern music (despite his wish, pieces of his creations were adopted to the opera). He was also excellent as a performer, due to his wonderful tenor. The Hasidim do not exaggerate when they describe him as a "live piano". Modzjitz became the source of Hasidic music and a magnet for thousands of "pilgrims" who

came to listen to his singing. About one thousand niggunim that he created were listed and written down.

*

Rabbi Saul Yedidia came four times to settle in Eretz Israel but every time something went wrong and he was forced to return abroad. When he visited the land in 1935, he left his son Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu "to put a stake in the land." Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu settled in Tel Aviv while the rest of the family returned to Modzjitz. When Hitler's armies invaded Poland, Rabbi Saul Yedidia succeeded, in the last minute, to flee to Vilna, and after many tribulations arrived in the United States. He was received there with enthusiasm by his many admirers, who built him a luxurious residence and tried to revive the crown of Modzjitz. But his love was Eretz Israel, and so he left all the splendor behind him and immigrated to Israel in the very days of the struggle which preceded the declaration of independence. He decided firmly not to return to the Diaspora anymore. This time his ambition succeeded, but tragically. He spent only six months enjoying the land's air and giving his thousands of Hasidim and admirers some of his power, until he was struck with a serious illness. On the very same day in which the United Nations voted for the establishment of a Jewish state [November 29, 1947], the voice of the Hasidic music genius was silenced. Rabbi Saul Yedidia died when he was just sixty one years old...

At that time, the first rifle sounds of the Arab murderers were heard. The roads became dangerous. Nevertheless the Hazan Ish [a well-known Admor] decided that the funeral procession would leave for Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. The funeral proceeded as planned, and Rabbi Saul Yedidia was one of the last people to be buried on the Mount of Olives. According to Hasidic tradition, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu was declared, by his father's grave, the new Admor of the House of Modzjitz.

*

Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu was also musical from the dawn of his childhood. While his father was still alive, he composed songs that were sung by his father. When he was crowned Admor, new springs of creations opened inside him, and the Modzjitz Hasidim knew that the chain was still continuing...

He kept on his modest lifestyle and continued to live at his small apartment on Gil'adi Street. Only a year ago, following efforts by his Hasidim, the new building was completed on Dizengof Street, and the Court of Modzjitz arrived at its restful destination. The building is of two stories. The first floor contains the synagogue, a mikve and a matzoth oven. The second floor is the Rabbi's residence. At first, the aristocratic neighbors did not eye the Hasidic invasion to their neighborhood favorably. But soon they were captivated too by the beautiful niggunim and accepted their new neighbors willingly.

Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu (like his father and grandfather) does not know how to read notes, yet he remembers all the many niggunim that he composed, in addition to those of his fathers. After the havdalah, we asked him how he composed and what makes them so attractive. A wide smile appeared on the Rabbi's face when he said: "I will give you the same answer that my late father gave answering the same question: the niggunim are matters that come out of the heart and therefore enter the heart. And when do the matters come out of the heart? When the heart is full and overflowing..."

By N. Bar Oryan -- Ma'ariv Daily, Elul 8, 1948, Tel Aviv

שיר המעלות

א ניגון פון מאדזשיצער רבין

נעהערט צו פארשריבן דורך א. הי. ש. ז.

Gioioso poco a poco risvegliato. (פרויליך-טון אנהויב געמיסליך.)

mf (געמיסליך-נידעקע תהלהבות)

f (קערט זיך וואס ווייטער)

DS (con reprise) (רי שטימונג ווערט נאך לעבדאפטער-צופקא)

pp *f* *DC - Senza fine.*

דא ווערט געגעבן איינער פון מאדזשיצער רבינס אויסגעצויכנטע נגונים, פון א לעבדאפטן פרוילעכן. זשאנר. קלויז איז דער נגון אין כמות, אבער אין איכות צעצישט ער זיך אויף „דריי הונדערט מיט צען וועלטן“... דאס איז איינער פון יענע נגונים, וואס צייכענען זיך אויס מיט זייער עלאסטאישקייט אין דער פראזע. מען קאן אים טראץ זיין באשטימטן „שיר המעלות-נאמען צופאסן צו צענדליקער פארשידענע תפילות, תהילים, זמירות וכדומה ווי צב"ש: אויף „יום ליבשה“, „ישמח משה“, „ישמחו במלכותך“, „מנוחה ושמחה“, „השומר שבת“, „אסדר לסעודתא“, „אומר בשבחין“, „מרן דבשמיא“, „בראה כהן“, „כי אנו עמד“ וכדומה און אפילו בשעת הדחק אויף „שושנה יעקב“...

MUSICAL SCORE

A Melody of the Modzjitzer Rabbi

[Page 236 or Yiddish-Hebrew Book]

Here is presented one of the Modzjitzer Rabbi's admirable melodies, in a lively, joyous genre. The melody is small in quantity, but in quality, it stretches over "three hundred and ten worlds". This is one of those melodies which distinguish themselves by the elasticity of their phrasing. One can nevertheless designate it or the quality of the song to which tens of assorted psalms, Sabbath songs, could be set, like the following: "Yom Libsha, Yishmach Moshe, Yishmahu Bemalchutach, Menuach and Simcha, Hashomer Shabbat, Esdar Lesodta, Omer Beshebchin, Meren Davshemya, Marah Kohen, Ki Anu Emed and Shoshenet Yaacov".

RABBI AVRAHAM SHMELTZSTEIN, zal

BY ARYE BUCKSPAN / TEL AVIV

I arrived in Israel in winter 1932 via Jaffa Port. The sea was stormy. We were led from the ship to boats, and Arab porters carried us piggyback to the shore. There we were met by a bus and a Jewish Agency official. We rode to an immigrant house on Ha'aliya Street in Tel Aviv. We stayed there several days, until emissaries from the kibbutzim came and divided us. I was sent to Ramat Rachel [a kibbutz near Jerusalem] as a member of the Labor Battalion.

While in Tel Aviv, I took the opportunity to visit two families from Demblin: the Avram Shmeltzstein family and the David Rozenfeld family. The Shmeltzsteins received me very well. Avram Shmeltzstein was a noble man to the utmost degree. I remember that when visiting him in his small shop in the Shappira neighborhood, a worker came in and asked for soda. Avraham begged him not to buy it, since it was a hot day and the soda was cold, and the worker could become ill. When the worker insisted, he asked him to at least drink it bit by bit. Between one customer and another, he wrote his book "My Life's Epithet"...

He explained to me that because he did not have much time to live, he was building himself a living gravestone in which he told his life story. He managed to print the book, and died shortly thereafter.

He treated me generously, did not let me go until I had lunch with him. He and his wife Crossa inquired about my situation. They asked, worried, what would I do in Israel without money and occupation, because they knew me as a weak yeshiva boy, not very healthy. I replied that they should not worry, "I came to Israel as a pioneer, and I am going to the Labor Battalion of Ramat Rachel in Jerusalem". The same happened when I visited the Rosenfelds, who lived in a cottage by the sea, in the Mahlul neighborhood, and worked as a carpenter.

[See PHOTO-B35 at the end of Section B]

LETTERS AND RESPONSES

EDITED BY ANDZJA SHMELTZSTEIN

The following are passages from letters by Reb Avram Shmeltzstein to Dr. Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl and responses in Herzl's newspaper Die Welt, as well as articles on Reb Avram's books in the dailies Hatzofe and Hamelitz.

A LETTER TO DR. HERZL

His honor the enlightened sage, captain of the ship of Israel, Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl,

Since I read your book "The Jewish State", and since I heard your voice crying over the nation's ruin, and you said that her condition should be improved, and her remnants to be brought back to Zion, I became strongly attached to the Zionist Idea, as if an unseen hand pulled at my hair and said: "This is the way to go."

To my great sorrow, some objectors to this idea came forth from among us. But if they were safe in this land that is not theirs, and if the Jews were not as ants to be stumped on by the nations, then maybe they were right. But no! The Jews have no safe place in all the world, and as our sages said: "In your land you are safe, and you are not safe abroad" (The Book of Bechukotay). They also said: "Assets outside of Israel are not blessed." They had the vision, two thousands years ago, of the troubles awaiting their people in the Diaspora. The Jews were assaulted for no reason. And even if there are Jews in what appears like a safe country, that safety will not last forever. Most likely they would hear from the government of that country that they should get out of there.

I am preaching for Zion and trying to dispel the dark clouds that are hanging above Zionism, but even I was not spared the poisonous arrows and the sparks of the agitators. Therefore I decided to publish my book *Nogah Esh Lezion* [The Light of Zion's Flame] to show them, and the Zionists as well, that Zionism is the panacea for the disease of our people.

Lover of Israel! My book throws light on the heavens of Zionism, and therefore it needs to be distributed among the Zionists, so that it persuades them more than several preachers. But since I am not sitting at the shade of money to send my book free, you must understand what the matter is. I wish only to pick a few oats, a quantity that would suffice to enable me to print the rest of my books.

As an answer to my letter, a review of my book was printed in *Die Welt* monthly.

A man as devoted to our idea as the comrade Avram Shmeltzstein, who attracted many a strong men by his power, has published a valuable book in pure Hebrew, *Nogah Esh Letzion*. This book contains valuable, pleasant matters, which the sage A. S. preached to the Zionists in the town of Demblin.

The sermons have shown to the Zionists the true Zionist way. His hope will strengthen him, for also his uncompleted work is blessed.

A REVIEW OF MY BOOK IN THE NEWSPAPER *HATZFIRAH*, ISSUE NUMBER 227, 1900:

The author tells us the history of the book in the beginning... Indeed the writer is right in writing that his book can persuade many people to the cause of Zion, and to plant the seed of Zionism in the reader's heart. The sagacious author Avram Smeltzstein is a basket full of books, and in numerous articles taken from the Torah, Talmud and Midrash, and all the books written after the closing of the Talmud, he proves the greatness of the settlement in the Holy Land, and that we should not sit idly and await miracles from heaven, but we must take pains to return to our Holy Land, naturally, with permission from the nations, by buying lands and building colonies, etc.

His book can be a faithful source to all Zionist preachers, who can draw from which all the articles that can awaken the hearts, all the pearls that can be arranged in the crown of the Zionist idea, all the pleasantries that can benefit their listeners.

And another advantage to this book: his author is not limited in his scope. Zionism for him is a general term to all kinds of ends that are needed for a people who needs to be awakened to a new life. Zionism demands our brethren not just to envision the settling of the land, and the return of the sons to the bosom of their mother, but that they should live together in peace, educate their children to Torah, wisdom and labor, be well behaved, improve their ways, be clean, etc.

For this he deserves much honor. May all the other preachers for Zion speak like him with logic. All the arguments in the book, as I said, are good and beautiful and make great impression.

Indeed, we were most impressed by his last two articles: *When There is No Wisdom, There is no Fear* and *The Tree of Life*. In the first one, the author chose to write about this wonderful idea: "Rabbi Eliezer said, the First Man extended from the earth to the heavens, and for his sin, God put his hand of him and made him small." (from *Haggigah* b.) He also interpreted wisely Psalm 148: "Haleluya, praise God from the heavens," etc. Every verse was used by him as a foundation for stories on the skies and planets, the earth and the universe, according the research of the sages, the great wonders that are seen throughout nature, in the kingdom of plants and the living, and especially as a speaking person -- He concludes his article in these words: "For Man, wherever he is, is a superior creature, who must understand and inquire about the

Creator's mysteries and the secrets of the heavens, and then he shall see the answers and will bless the Creator of Wonders," etc.

The last article, "The Tree of Life", is even more so, whereas he writes about the quality of cleanliness, and on the necessity that our brethren have in the ways of hygiene. Here also he quoted the ideas of our Sages, and presented principles that the Israeli man should remember and live by: to have fresh air, to keep a clean home, to eat and drink clean food and beverage, to stay away from sick persons (our Sages have warned of this too), and he shall live in a place from which the sun rises and sets, and that his clothes shall be clean, and that he would not let himself be worried, and be careful not to eat foods that are difficult to digest, and that in schools they should practice gymnastics, and that everyone must bathe in water, etc.

Then the author writes about the importance of material and spiritual education: to teach the boys order and discipline. Those befitting Torah should study Torah. Those fit for science, should study science.

He concludes his article so: "Man must excel in other complementary studies, be careful with cleanliness and purity, take pains in both kinds of education, and be careful with his soul; should know the past and understand what is in the future, etc. He should also give to the poor, and this is the purpose of Zionism and what Zionists are striving for."

Give us more thinkers like comrade Avram Shmeltzstein, and more wizing and beneficial books as "Nogah Esh Lezion", and then indeed, a great light will shine over Zion and our people.

A REVIEW IN THE NEWSPAPER *HAMELITZ* ON THE BOOK "THE LIGHT OF ZION'S FLAME", ISSUE NUMBER 253, 1900:

This book, the author tells us in his foreword, is a collection of articles and speeches which he delivered in his town about the Return to Zion. He thus explained to his listeners what Zionism demands from them. Its purpose: to be faithful persons in the eyes of God and Man, as we were once in Zion.

As he saw that his ideas bore fruit, and many were moved to Zionism, he said: It is not good that these ideas are left in the corner; I shall make them a tool for those distant from Zionism, so they learn to walk in the way up, the way of life and peace. Therefore, it was time to plant these articles in the vineyard of literature and let them see light.

In the first six chapters the author proves to us, by many references from holy books, the mitzvah of the return to Zion and the obligation of Israelites to take steps forward by speaking before kings, raising funds, in order to redeem the Holy Land from foreigners.

When he deals with the Zionism and the settlement in the Holy Land, he does not confine himself to the narrow realm of solely settling the land. Zionism for him is a general concept to all issues pertaining to a reviving people. Zionism demands from its followers to live in peace together, to educate their children for Torah, science and work, and to be courteous.

Especially valuable are his last two articles: When There is No Wisdom, There is no Fear and The Tree of Life. In the first one he writes his perception of the world, writing about the planets, the plants, the inanimate and the living creatures, according to the researchers of nature. He proves that Man was created in the image of God, and that these wonders should be investigated and God should be thanked for his wisdom and wonders.

Last but not least: in his last article he writes extensively about cleanliness and urges our brethren to live by the rules of hygiene. In his words he quotes books by the sages of nature. He proves: the world depends on cleanliness, which is a great principle for all fauna and flora. Therefore he presents principles that are necessary for Man. To breath fresh air, to keep a clean home, to live in a place at which the sun rises, to observe the cleanliness of his clothes, to stay away from worry and agony, to not eat foods that are difficult to digest, to set time for a meal, to exercise physically in school, to avoid reading in twilight to the light of a candle, to avoid ugliness and to bathe in water.

After that the author writes about the greatness of material and spiritual education, and concludes: "Man must excel in other complementary studies, be careful with cleanliness and purity, take pains in both kinds of education, and be careful with his soul; should know the past and understand what is in the future. He should also give to the poor, and this is the purpose of Zionism and what Zionists are striving for." May there be more speakers like him for Zion.

And so wrote Reb Avram on the death of his son Ya'acov:

"In the morning and evening I taught my elder son Yaacov the Bible, Talmud and the Hebrew language. He studied foreign languages with an expert teacher. He was so absorbed in study that the day was not long enough for him. At the age of 17, his mind was like that of a 40-year old. He was a true scholar. But unfortunately, he was swept away by the socialist movement, which took the minds of the youngsters. They were persecuted with rage by the Russian government. Many were killed, and many others sent to distant Russian cities. My son feared that he would be captured, and took his own life in his own hands..."

A Bitter Eulogy for my Son Ya'acov

**My son, I raised you in talent and wisdom
You observed the Sabbath and taught me
Hebrew you spoke without mistakes
You loved the tents of Torah very much**

**Charity and truth met in your heart
Justice and peace joined in you
Your parents saw and became happy
They found comfort in you and shone**

**Suddenly you were taken by zealousness
To undermine the government's cruelty
For you could not bear your people's oppression
No!**

**As a thinker and a sage
You thought to ease your people's suffering
Your soul's way is fierce and your heart pounded
But what you did only was to kill yourself**

**Hah, my son! You fell dead
With clean hands and pure soul
You did not kill and did not take
But the truth from your heart became**

**Hah! The candle broke and the light died
The Spring in bloom but death is too
On the best and most pure
I weep with my aching soul**

**The skies of my happiness are covered with clouds of lead
The angel of death ordered my sun to diminish
This evil his eye reserved to everyone
But my son Yaacov was lost in a day**

**Hah! My son! You dug your grave
You have not yet seen much goodness and satisfaction
Oy! How great are the sorrow and grief
For you I shall go down in pain**

**On my broken heart
No comforter I have except for God in Heaven
He shall gather you
And comfort me with the mourners of Jerusalem**

MY FATHER AVRAHAM HALEVY SHMELTZSTEIN

BY ZE-EV SHMELTZSTEIN, ENG / SAU PAULO, BRAZIL

My father, Avram Halevi Shmeltzstein, son of Yisrael and Rivkah, was born in the city of Pulaw, on December 11, 1865 (first day of Chanukah). His parents were well-to-do merchants and religious.

Pulaw was a county seat, surrounded by many small towns and villages. A weekly fair brought livelihood for many. The town also had a small university, attended by many youth from the area, including many Jews from the nearby towns. My father, however, as most of the Jewish kids at that time, studied first at the heder, and later in the yeshiva. But religious studies were not enough for him; he aspired to gain wider, secular knowledge. Without any instruction, he studied the Hebrew language, Jewish history and secular subjects. For this purpose, he bought books in Warsaw and spent days and nights studying. His study brought him closer to the Zionist idea, and he was one of the first Lovers of Zion in the entire area.

When he was eighteen, he married the daughter of Shim'on Silberman, from a village near Demblin. After his marriage he wanted to be self-sufficient, and in 1890 moved to Demblin and opened a grocery store. Soon he became a central figure in his new town, and was surrounded by many scholars who, like him, wished to widen their horizons, to leave the ways of life that so oppressed them. My father was devoted to the Zionist idea and started preaching for it among the town's youngsters. His activity was looked upon unfavorably by his wife's family, who were very religious, and a breakup in the relationship between them followed.

In 1897 he published his book "Column of Fire", in Hebrew. After founding the first Zionist society in his town, in 1898, and being elected its chairman, friction developed between him and the town's religious residents. The town Rabbi demanded that he and his followers be expelled from the synagogue and even excommunicated; so much did they hate the Zionists and the Zionist idea. My father and his friends had no choice but to establish a synagogue of their own, in which my father gave sermons and speeches every Sabbath, on the Love of Zion and the settlement of the Land of Israel. My father's activity intensified before the Second Zionist Congress, and since then he corresponded with the leaders of the Zionist Movement: Dr. B. Z. Herzl, Rabbi Yitzhak Ya'acov Reines, B. Eisenstat and others. In those days he wrote many articles to *Hatzfirah*, *Die Welt* and *Hamelitz*. In 1899 he published his second book, "The Light of Zion's Flame", dedicated to the idea of the Love of Zion and the settlement of the Land of Israel. His third book, Carry the Banner to Zion, which was a follow-up on his earlier book, was published in 1902. During all those years the debates and arguments in the town continued. The conflict became even more bitter after my father founded a school which employed the teacher, Noah Friedheim, who was well known for his secular views. The religious did not let the matter rest

because, they viewed this act as a breakthrough of secularism and the eventual conversion of their children. One day they assembled and threatened to destroy the school, but the secularists, namely the Zionists, came to protect it. There was a bitter scuffle and both sides used all means they could find. The town was divided into two camps: the religious, who were the majority, and the Zionists, the minority.

On the day of Purim my father opened his shop, saying that Purim was not a holiday in which one should rest from work. But the town's religious did not agree with him. Despite the fact that many in the town agreed with my father, they did not open their shops on Purim, in fear of the religious. But my father insisted and opened the shop. Therefore the name "*Der Purim Soycher*" [The Purim merchant] was given to him and accompanied him for the rest of his life.

In 1903 his wife died in labor, with their newborn. My father remained a widower with four small children. He underwent a very difficult period at that time. A year later my father married his second wife, my mother Krossa, who raised his children and gave birth to two girls and myself, the youngest in the family. My mother helped him in his business as much as she could. And then another tragedy happened to him again. His elder son Ya'acov, 17-years old, was swept away with the revolutionary movement of 1907, like many other Jewish youngsters at that time, and the Czarist police persecuted them with rage. Ya'acov, fearing capture by the Czarist police, committed suicide. His two other sons also left home. In 1911 his son Chaim emigrated to America, and in 1913 his second son Yitzhak followed suit. The family became smaller and smaller, and then the First World War broke out. My father's tribulations were many during the war years. He began moving from one city to another, holding many children in his arms. When the war ended he returned to Demblin, but the city was devastated, his property robbed, and he had to start from the beginning. He slowly rehabilitated himself and his family, and again earned a living. Then again he became devoted to the Zionist idea. After the Balfour Declaration, in 1917, the Zionist idea became established among the townspeople, the movement expanded, and my father was appointed chairman of Demblin's Zionists. His home became the magnet for the Zionists, who came to hear Father speak. He also preached in the synagogue for the idea of the people's revival in the land of his ancestors. After the San Remo Convention of 1920, in which the British Mandate on Palestine was approved, my father established the first Hebrew school in Demblin, with the teacher Scheinberg, who worked as a Hebrew teacher.

In 1924 my father published his fourth book, "Wall of Fire to Zion".

With the beginning of the Aliyah to the Land of Israel, my father began to consider the fulfillment of his life's dream: to ascend to Eretz Israel. But the gates of the land were closed for him, because he did not have the certificate *[issued by the British authorities to a limited number of Jews every year, as part of their immigration controls]*. Only those who could prove that they had 500 English pounds or were farmers, were allowed in, and my father was neither. But in those days, Yisrael

Eliezer Hoffstein, grandson of the Rabbi of Kozhnitz, established the colony "*Avodat Yisrael*" [work of Israel], near Haifa. My father bought there a piece of land intending to settle there. He liquidated his business in Demblin, and on Nissan 25, 1925, my father left Demblin with all his family for the land of his dream, Eretz Israel, in which he lived until his death. My father died in Heshvan 15, November 3, 1938.

Shalom to his soil.

BINYAMIN DEMBLIN (TAITELBOIM)

BY MORDECHAI HALAMISH

(From his article in Al Hamishmar Daily, "American Jews will not Assimilate",

Binyamin Demblin (whose real name is Taitelboim), one of the most important writers of Yiddish prose, has been living in the United States for 44 years. He is originally from Demblin, Poland, a city that had other names: Modzjitz, Ivangorod, Irena, Fortstat and more. Before his bar-mitzvah, he left the home of his father, who was a merchant of used clothes, and moved to Radom. "Both of us were made of the same tough stuff," B. Demblin remembers, "and therefore the friction between us was too painful." He stayed in Radom for two years, and in 1911, at age 15, he arrived at Warsaw and soon became a labor activist and was elected first secretary of the Jewish Needle Workers in Poland. In 1920 he arrived in Paris, and in January 1921, he arrived in America.

For many years he made his living as a hat maker, until joining in 1938 the staff of the Joint and the United Jewish Appeal. In 1947 he quit his position to send relief packages to needy Jews throughout the world.

*

When did he write? All the years. After work, naturally. Therefore, his books began to appear when he was relatively old.

What motivated him to create? The feeling that if we would not endeavor to preserve the great period of Poland's Jewry, the people's main force in modern times, it would sink into oblivion. Not just from a historical point of view. Only wide-ranging literary work can reflect life as it was. Even though Russian life was not cut and broke as ours was, we would not know much about them if not for epic novels such as War and Peace. As our Sages say, "If not I for myself, who is for me", says Demblin. Therefore, we are doing the work. By "we" he means: Y. Bashevis, Y. Glatstein, Y. Metzker, myself and others in the United States; Y. Hopper, A. M. Fuchs, Y. Spiegel, A. Karpinovitch and others, in Israel."

[See PHOTO-B36 at the end of Section B]

His literary crop is a fine one not just from its level and quality, but also its quantity: "Oyfen Schwell" was published in Warsaw in 1933, "West Side", an American social novel on the Great Depression, was published in Zamelbicher of Opatosho and Leivic in 1936. At that time the writer changed his name to Demblin, because he wanted to perpetuate his home town, which he felt was being forgotten. This novel was translated into Hebrew by Samson Meltzer and published here [in Israel] in 1954.

"Zwei on a Dritter" is a novel on fictitious marriage between a pioneer and a young woman, made to enable her to emigrate to Israel. Demblin visited Poland, and on his way back in 1933, stayed in Israel in 1933, and then wrote the novel, which was published in 1939.

The novel series "Erev Nacht" is at the center of his writing. The first book in the series, bearing the same name, was published in Israel in 1954 and won the Lui Lamed prize. The second book, "Oif Aigenem Barrat", was also published in Israel, in 1961. The writer is now preparing for print his third book in the series, "In der Welt Aryen". These are partly autobiographic novels, which due to their wide latitude, cover large issues about Jewish life in Europe and America. How many books will be in the series? As many as time and strength will allow, says Demblin. Meanwhile, he writes also non-series works: "Die Tzankendike Licht", "A refugee in New England", "Der Tate is Gekommen", and the book of short novels, "Oif Drei Kentinenten".

September 6, 1964

B. DEMBLIN (TAITELBOIM)

From "The Lexicon of New Jewish Literature", 2nd Volume, Published by the Old World Jewish Culture Congress (together with Tziko), New York, 1958.

Born on the 13th of September 1897, pen name of Yosef-Benyamin Taitelboim. Born in Modzjitz, Poland, studied in heder. At 11 years of age, he went to study in the synagogue, in the study hall. After bar-mitzvah, he was sent to Radom, apprenticed to a hat maker. He worked from dawn until after mid-night. He endured all of the sorrows and blows of an apprentice in that era. After a long day of hard work with just a very faint little lamp, he studied writing and taught himself to write and began to read Yiddish literature. In the days of the First World War, he lived and worked in Warsaw. After 1919, he set out for Paris where he lived for over a year. In January of 1921, Demblin emigrated to the United States and he began to write around the year 1916. At that time, he published as a reporter in a journal of the professional workers' unions of Warsaw.

From Paris he sent a reportage to Life Question [name of a magazine in Warsaw]. In New York he published skits and stories in a variety of magazines: "Gerechtikeis", "Forsrit", "Frei Arbeter-Shtime", "Forward", "Tzokonft", "Yiddisher Kemfer", "Onzer Tzait", a book of collected work of different writers that was collected and edited by H. Laivik [famous Yiddish poet] and Joseph Opatosho [famous Yiddish writer] and in other smaller journals in other parts of the country. He also contributed his work in the People's Newspaper in Warsaw, the Press in Buenos Aires, and Latest News in Tel Aviv and other places.

In book form he published "On the Threshold" under the name Binyomin Taitelboim, Warsaw, 1933, 256 pages; "West Side", New York, 1938, 201 pages; "Two and a Third", New York, 1943, 195 pages; "Before Night" (the first book of a trilogy), Tel Aviv-New York, 1954, 299 pages (won a prize from the Luis Lomer Fund); "Flickering Candle", a novel, New York, 1957, 320 pages. "West Side" in 1954 was printed in Tel Aviv in a Hebrew translation by Simson Meltzer. In 1939-1943 he pro-edited the anthology "Continuation of Tradition" in New York.

In Poland he was active in the Bund and in the Workers Union in the needle trades [garment industry]. In 1938 he was the secretary of the Yiddish pen club in New York. In 1939-1946 he participated in "Joint" and worked for United Jewish Appeal.

His literary name originates from the fact that he was born in Demblin. Other pseudonyms that he took were Y. Burlak and Yosef Warshavsky.

"B. Demblin belongs to the prose writers, who honestly earned their reputation. He possesses unrestrained style. He very seldom falls into the pathetic tone, but his style has temperament." (Shlome Bikel)

"B. Demblin arrives straight away with a very powerful impression, his own kind of step. From his first book on, he has a very sharp eye for social developments in the broad context of America. He's someone who is a very careful craftsmen who takes a great deal of trouble with each sentence." (Y. Glatstein - [a very famous Yiddish poet])

B. Demblin lives in New York.

BINYAMIN TENE

BY G. KERSEL, LEXICON OF HEBREW LITERATURE, SIFRIAT POALIM, 1967

Tene, formerly Taitelboim; Binyamin, son of Arye-Leiv and Primmiet of Licht, Born in Demblin on December 10, 1914

He studied and was educated in the heder and the Hebrew Academy "Chinnuch" [education] in Warsaw. Graduate of Hashomer Hatza'ir [the young guard socialist youth movement] and training in Slonim. Emigrated in 1937, joined a kibbutz in Petach Tikvah, and settled with the group in Ayalon in 1938. He lived there until 1948. He was envoy to Poland in 1947. Since 1948, he is editor of Mishmar Liyladim [guard for children, the children's weekly of Al Hamishmar, Hashomer Hatza'ir's official daily].

[See PHOTO-B37 at the end of Section B]

He began publishing his songs in 1933 (In Hashomer Hatza'ir in Warsaw), and since then in He'atid [the future] and newspapers in Israel. His poetry books include "Homeland" (1939), "Load in Galilee" (1941), "With the Chisel of Sorrow" (1945), "Yesterdays on the Threshold" (1947), "The Nightingale -- Songs from a Forest" (1963). His poetry for children: "Danny Dan" and a "Tricycle" (1952) and "The Wonder Crop" (1957). Translations: "Flames" by S. Bzhezhovski (vol. a and b., 1939-1940), "Hymns" (1942) and "The Best of the Land" by Y. Witlin (1943), "Songs of the Ghetto" (1946), "Songs" (1957), "Ketina and the Whale" (1956) and "Wonderful Wonders" by Y. Tovim (1958), "Flames in the Ashes" by R. Korchak-Rozhka (1946), "One from the City and Two from a Family, anthology of one thousands biographies of children in Poland, Holocaust refugees", editing and translating (1947), "Candles that Ended" by M. Strigler (1958), "The Golden Jug, popular myths and folklore" (1956), "History of One Year" by N. Nossov (1956), "The Great Adventure" (1958), "Hello to the Jungle" by Y. Bzhecheva (1959), "The Eight Day of the Week" by M. Chlasko (1958), "One Hundred Years of Polish Prose" (with S. Har-Even, 1959), "The Fury and the Heart" (with Z. Arad, 1959), "The Inquisitors" (1961), "Climbing over Mountains" (1964) by Y. Andzhievski, "Tricky Trick" by Y. Bzhecheva (1963), "Sea of Life and Death" by A. Rodnitzki (1964), "Legends" by H.C. Andersen a and b 1964), and with H. Peleg: "Half the Way to the Moon" (stories by Soviet writers, 1964). 1967 -- "Songs and Poems" -- his verse collection for 30 years. 1969 -- translation of "Songs and Ballads" by Itzik Manger.

Brother Ze'ev lives in Paris. Sister Rivkah lives in Warsaw. Sister Sarah perished in Auschwitz with the father (transported from Paris via Dranse).

CHAIM TRALER

BY WOLF TENENBOIM / PARIS

"To honor a good person" -- I believe that Chaim Traler deserves the following little epigraph, when one remembers the great turn out of people who came to accompany him on his last way.

In Demblin he was called Chaim Itche Paisachs [Chaim, son of Itche Paisachs]. Who in town didn't know his father, a man of great learning, Itche Paisachs. He was, after all, one of the most knowledgeable Talmudist in the city, because Demblin in those years was really a center of Torah learning.

When it was necessary to have someone examine a young man, Chaim Traler's father was the one who was called upon, Itche Paisachs. Also, when a young man wanted to receive a religious certification, at that time, there was a yeshiva in Demblin, where a hundred or so men would study. They had come there from a variety of towns. The examiner was Itche Paisachs and his brother Shmuel Paisachs.

Under the influence of his great scholarly father, Chaim studied in the study hall, in the synagogue, until he was 18 years old. I believe that as a result of that he always retained a great love of the Jewish word and Jewish culture.

After, new winds began to blow around and new ideas. Chaim left for Warsaw and began to work. He remained his whole life as a worker.

[See PHOTO-B38 at the end of Section B]

Here, Chaim, you fulfilled the teaching which you learned when you were studying Torah: that when you live from something that you do with your own hands, that is the source of your livelihood, you'll be happy in this world and in the world to come.

You remained true your whole life. To your very last strength you remained a worker and worked.

The Second World War broke out which cost us Jews terrifically. We lost a third of our people. Our town of Demblin was wiped out, the town that Chaim loved so dearly.

At the outbreak of the War, Chaim was in Poland. Fate wished that he should share the road of suffering of our unhappy brothers. From there, he managed to

go to Russia where he joined the Red Army and fought against the barbaric Hitler hoards.

But, at the same time, Chaim found time and strength to devote to different social and cultural work. He also found time to give to the Yiddish theater.

Chaim was a profounder of our association of people from Demblin and a committee member.

We remember Chaim's talks, his lectures and his beautiful speeches at our evenings, especially our evenings of remembrance.

He always remembered his childhood years and studying in the synagogue and that gave him strength and courage to work for Jewish culture and for Jewish theater, to which he gave his last strength.

OF OUR PERSONALITIES

BY BENJAMIN ZILBERMAN / HOLON

YARMEYOHU VANAPOL (YARME)

Who even wants to try and take on the task of describing Yarme. He was beloved by all layers of society. He was revered both as a doctor and as a human being. As a doctor he had a reputation not only in Demblin but in the whole vicinity, among both Jews and Christians. There was always before his door a line of peasant men and women from distant little villages in the countryside. They believed in him. They revered him almost as a God because of his medical help which brought them back to health. The fee for his work wasn't something that he collected as you would for most jobs. He knew who he should ask for money and who he shouldn't. He took from people who could afford it without exception and spared others who couldn't, among both Jews and gentiles. Quite often people received treatment without paying a penny.

Thanks to him the town had its clinic for poor people. He gave quite a bit of his strength and time there. In recognition of his dedicated work, he was made honorary president. People in the town spoke about his party affiliation, but that didn't in any way stop or interfere with his humanitarian attitude towards every sick person. Nor did it interfere with their feeling comfortable in their going to him. He provided his services to people who were going to Israel without asking for any money. The writer of these lines, before traveling to Israel, received medical treatment from Yarme and he wouldn't take a cent for it. He took an interest in me. He was very curious about the Hakshera Kibbutz and about Eretz Israel. Notwithstanding the fact that his father, Zalman Vanapol, was a nationalist Jew [Zionist], the children still loved him dearly, even though they themselves were far from his ideology. But they always felt close to his warm, Jewish heart.

Yarmeyohu, or Yarme, as he was affectionately called, was a man of such stature and so valued that we should remember him and honor him for his humanitarian deeds.

NUACH SIEGELMAN

He was a religious man of some property and also a Talmud scholar. It was said of him that when there was a ceremony for a person who had died, his heart felt words moved everybody to tears. He was somebody who was both very astute in matters of the Torah and in matters of business. When you came into his store to buy buttons or things that you needed for writing, pencils and erasers, or little

sewing accessories, a little bell would ring in the kitchen. But, Reb Nuach didn't exactly run out of the kitchen and into the store. With very soft and measured steps, he always took his time. He always treated his customers with great respect. The store was big. All of the walls were covered with shelves and they were subdivided into little rows of different kinds of big and small packages. He would take down a little box with buttons in it, or with needles, for a customer. The customer had to have enough patience to wait for this process to take place, because he did everything very slow, very meticulously. He would take off the little binding that held the box together. He wanted to make sure that nothing got rumpled or torn. He was very concerned that the box itself didn't get damaged in any way at all. He was completely oblivious to whether or not the customer was in a big rush, it was not of his concern. He always did his work, very easy going and very careful, in a precise manner. But, the customers, by and large, didn't get insulted, and they always came back to buy something. There were actually hundreds of little boxes and packages on his shelves covered with dust. It had been years since a human hand had touched them. Looking at them all, one could think that they'd actually grown into the shelves, somehow. But, Reb Nuach used to say that, and he was really very proud of it, "There were really true antiques up there". He didn't use them now, but they had great worth. Most of them were buttons for clothes that our grandmothers' wore and little accessories for the wedding clothes that had been used generations ago and other little antiques like that. Curious people used to come in and look at how Reb Nuach used to stand on his step ladder and sort through and take notes about each little box, whose little labels had become unreadable because they'd been there so long. Everybody was always quite amazed at his slow pace and his great patience.

MOSHE HALLELIS ANGLISTER

He was a Guerrer Hasid, but not a very ostentatious one, a very simple honest Jew, and not a fanatic. He made a very poor living, but always had a very cheerful attitude. He had a lot of different trades. He could do just about anything, but it was hard for him to make a decent Sabbath for his family. Despite all of that, he was always very cheerful and would tell jokes and was very witty. Actually people didn't realize, most of the time, how poor he was. His chief occupation was to paint signs. But in a town as small as Demblin, that was a very thin kind of source of livelihood. But he lived the whole week in a very spare and frugal way and he put together all of his earnings so that he could make a Sabbath as luxurious as possible.

Besides his work as a sign-painter, he also gave lessons in Yiddish writing and basic arithmetic to those children who did not attend the Povshechne school because of religious reasons. It was his goal that the children would learn no less than the pupils from the Povshechne school. Even the non-religious people had a lot of pleasure in talking to him, not just about the Torah or religious matters, but

also about worldly matters. He always could respond in a very matter of fact, to the point, way. He had a very objective way of talking. He wasn't the type of person who would scold or make fun of people who were not like him, that is, very pious, so he could live with everybody. His own sons, who did not follow his path, he understood, and there wasn't a big conflict between them, like one could often find in other households.

[See PHOTO-B39 at the end of Section B]

HALLEL SHTAMLER

A distinguished man of property, a Guerrer Hasid, he rarely traveled to the Rabbi, but he supported him generously from afar. His material situation enabled him to do that. He was one of the wealthy men in the town. People used to say of him that just when you think you know how much he's worth, he's worth even more. Nevertheless, he was a person without any arrogance. He never puffed himself up like other wealthy people in town. His way of conducting himself was with dignity and respect and he never refused anybody who needed help. Many people came to him and he never refused any of them.

His children were Peretz, Chaim-Rueben, Shloma, Shaindel and Lipe. The Jews in town used to say about them that he's going to need to go someplace else besides Demblin to get them mates because in Demblin there weren't enough rich people around to make an appropriate match for his children. Still, he did marry off all his sons to rich brides from respectable families, and his sons as well, became very rich. The youngest was inclined towards Zionism and he talked about Palestine, but later just thought about it. The grandfather, Biyomele (even his family called him that with affection), died a very good man at the age of 106.

His children inherited the orchard, but fate brought his descendants to nothing. The majority of his children and grandchildren were killed by the Nazis. Whole families were wiped out. Lipe, the youngest son of Hallel, was active in the Zionist organization. He traveled to a "Practice Kibbutz" [in Poland]. As happened to others, he fell into the hands of the Nazis, running along the road to Ryki.

YANKEL PERELSHTAIN

Yankel der Ryker - that's the way he was called, because he was from the neighboring town of Ryki. He arrived in Demblin with his brother and he found acquaintances in the synagogue. While founding the Zionist organization, he became one of its most active members. His ability to organize and to speak was quite well known in town. One said of him that he is "someone who speaks to the masses". He helped his parents in their work. He traveled to country fairs

with their little tailor business, but this didn't hinder him from giving a tremendous amount of his time and energy to the organization. He traveled to Warsaw to attend the Tz. K.; he'd been elected as a delegate to attend a conference there. Yankel never refused any mission for the organization, even when it affected his personal comfort. He was in the first of many Zionist actions, at a time when they were associated with getting knocked around. He was afraid of nobody. He used to say that the sacred work which he was involved in would rescue him. Also, after getting married, he and his wife, the active comrade, Rivka Yom-Tov, together formed a partnership and worked very hard for the movement. They were both murdered by the Nazis.

DAVID GOLDFINGER

He dedicated all of his years to Zionist activity. He spared neither his strength nor his money. Whenever there was a crisis and a lack of money, he was always the first to give generously. When one left a meeting at night, one didn't walk home but one walked to David Goldfinger's door. There, one would eat ices or drink soda water with Halva and there one would continue the discussions until midnight. David was active in all kinds of work and even the thought of getting knocked around by his opponents physically, didn't scare him. He used to brag that his ability to make ices would come in very handy once he got to Israel. Later though, he didn't live to see the dream realized.

AVRAM SHILINGER

One of the founders of the Zionist organization in 1929. Although he was occupied in helping his parents in their bakery, he found time to be active in all sorts of Zionist work. I, every once in a while, would call him to activities for KKL, when he was occupied in the bakery. He used to say to me, "Look and see if my father's looking". And when he slipped out of the bakery, his father noticed and screamed after him, "Avram, where are you running?! I'm here all by myself and I won't give you any advice here in the bakery." Avram pretended not to hear him, just as if his father were talking to somebody else completely. He used to say on these occasions, "The actions that we've got to do in the organization can't be put aside, have to happen now, but, I can always help in the bakery"

There weren't that many people who were so devoted in the organization.

YANKEL KAMIYAN

Better a close neighbor than a distant brother [Book of Mishlei, Proverbs]

Yankel was employed in providing half of the town with soda water and beer. He used to provide drinks as well to the fortress. Nevertheless, somewhere among all

these activities and his professional work, he was able to find time for the Modzjitzer Rabbi. He was a very pious Modzjitzer Hasid. He frequently used to lead morning prayers during the High Holidays. He was very highly praised by the very learned Hasidim and everybody had great pleasure hearing him pray.

The little kids were very delighted by his mountain of ice which grew greater and greater during the winter in preparation for the warm days to come. During the summer, one would chop off pieces of the ice and lay it around the balconies. The little bits of ice would fall down and the children used to catch them and suck on them in their mouths. Yankel used to scream and warn them, not with anger, because he wasn't, God forbid, a mean tempered Jew, but with love, "Children, that stuff, God forbid, can make you sick". But the little children had no desire to understand what he was talking about. The best Yankel could do was look away as if he'd seen nothing.

His son, Moshe Kamiyan, a Zionist for many years, dreamed for a very long time of taking the whole soda water factory to Israel. But, because of family reasons, he wasn't able to do that.

NUACH GERSHONS

His wine and liquor store was known way out in the countryside. On market day, Wednesday, the store was full of peasants who bought a little flask of Vodka and right there, on the threshold of the store, emptied it. This is because there was a law against actually drinking inside the store. Quite frequently they would stumble back into the store, quite drunk, wanting to buy another little bottle. When they started to go out again, they couldn't find the door.

Nuach was a very respected Jew. He did many good deeds and gave to charity with a broad hand. He made a very good living, but his wealth didn't turn his head. One used to say about him "a quiet man of wealth". His good deeds for others were done very quietly.

MOTEL AND YITZHAK SHOCHET

The two kosher butchers of the town, very dignified and respected Jews who were very learned in the Torah and of aristocratic descent. They were very modest and didn't try to make a lot of themselves. Everybody in town loved them and showed them great respect. Both for their very devoted work, as well as for their very humane way of acting.

I could call forth many, many good Jews with soft and compassionate hearts, always ready to help someone, Demblin had a great many people like that. All of the Jews were destroyed by the hands of the Nazi brutes.

MOSHE AIGLITZKY

Moshe Aiglitzky was like the leader of the youth organization, HaShomer Halomay". He put in a great deal of effort so that the organization would grow and have more and more members. He also was concerned that the youth should receive a worthwhile cultural education, and to be able to enjoy themselves and spend good times together. Moshe was active in the organization, not only at night after his work, but also during the day. One would see Moshe hurrying along like a very pious Jew going to prayer. "Moshe! Where are you running so fast?", one would ask him. He answered, "We've got to prepare for the young people a little excursion to Kazjimiyejz". His concern for the group was just like a father's concern for his children. The group was more sacred to him than anything.

Often, he would complain that his father would throw it up to him that he couldn't really work without his help and that the business was getting worse and weaker. Moshe answered that the Zionist work that he was doing was the ideal of his life and without it, his life would have no worth. He didn't even bother to try to respond to the remarks of his detractors and opponents, who would scold him with things like, "You poor drudge. What are you doing working so hard for a bourgeois party? It would be better for you to help your father so at least he'd have a nice coat to wear on the Sabbath." But, Moshe didn't answer such things. It was enough that his parents understood him. Although his parents were very religious, he spent the Sabbath as well in the Zionist work. They used to have marching drills with the young people in the afternoon. He would take them on excursions outside of town where they would have discussions about Zionism. He wasn't afraid either of his detractors in the Jewish communities or the local Christian boys. All of his official business like "Left-Right-Attention", all of that was conducted in Hebrew. People in the street were very thrilled when they heard him speaking in Hebrew. When people hear a Hebrew word..."They are really going to take us to Palestine". Taking the children back from a gathering like this with everybody singing songs did not please his opponents and "Hurrah for the Watchmen". But Moshe would defend his little flock, just like a bird defending its nest. In a letter to the author of these lines in Palestine, he wrote, "The organization grows. It's always getting bigger, more people are coming in all the time. The desire and the need to travel to Palestine is very great. And when it comes my turn to make Aliyah, I don't know what I'm going to do, because the organization really needs me, so I don't know if I'll be able to make my agricultural preparation." Later, he wasn't able to see his dream realized.

ELIEZOR FAIGENBOIM

One called him Lozerl. Not because of his small stature, but really out of love and affection for his good deeds. When there was an action taking place at the Zionist organization, was there ever an action in which Lozerl did not take part? Despite the weight of his obligation to make a living for his mother, brothers and sister, his father Yisrael had died before his time. Day and night he devoted himself to Zionist work. When a pioneer or someone who was headed for Israel passed through, on the way to one of these Kibbutzes in Poland, and when they needed a few dollars, the first thing that they would do would be to borrow it from Lozerl, and he would give them money out of his own pocket. Later on people would pay him back and if not, he wasn't mad. It was with love and a little bit of envy that he accompanied the comrades on their way to make the journey to Palestine. Because of family reasons, he wasn't able himself to realize his dream. His detractors and enemies hurt him and criticized him. What they said was, "Lozerl, the poor toiling drudge, you work so hard, give all your time and energy to a middle class organization, you don't get a penny for any of it". But, Lozerl, with a smile, never really got mad at anybody, no matter what they said. He would answer very calmly, "You'll see, after awhile you're going to belong to the organization too. Your pals, who right now find themselves in Russia, aren't even going to be able to come back." His words turned out to be very true. Lozerl, with his good heart, wanting to help everybody more than he could, never refused anybody a favor. Everyone of the comrades who made the trip to Palestine promised Lozerl with tears in their eyes that they would always think of him and somehow return his favors. And Lozerl did not forget the comrades after they had traveled away, and he stayed in contact with them. In each letter he would remind people with hope that he would make all possible efforts in order to fulfill his own dream of many years. But like so many others, devoted as he, he was killed by Hitler's murderers.

SHOLOM PUTERFLAM

Comrade Puterflam was one of the founders of the Zionist organization in 1929. He found himself in Warsaw with a group of friends from Demblin who had left their home in order to find work in the city. He showed them the way to Zionism. After work he would, with them, deal with the question of establishing a Zionist organization in their home town. On returning to Demblin for Shavuoth, he got to work on establishing a Zionist organization. He was elected the Chairman and a delegate from the KKL and he was active for a long time in both offices. For material reasons, he had to go back to Warsaw to work. But, when he came for the holidays, he remained a longer time in town. Neglecting his private work in order to help the organization, especially the establishment of Hashomer Haleumi. He was also an organizer of the drama circle of Hashomer Haleumi and the

members used to wonder at the enthusiasm and the ability with which he was able to conduct a whole range of activities and undertakings.

From his childhood, Zionism had interested him. Although he lived in a household with a variety of ideological persuasions, from the right to the left, he remained faithful to his youthful ideals of Zionism. During discussions with his opponents, everybody was always quite impressed by his tactful responses. It was often that he, from his meager wages, would spend far more on the organization than people who really had money in it. Later on, he did not live to see his dream fulfilled.

ZALMAN VANAPOL

Zalman, the folk doctor of the town for many years, enjoyed the trust of people as well as being trusted for the remedies that he produced. Every one of us wished him eternal life for his goodness and his warm Jewish heart. He would take stock of the financial resources of the sick people and often provide them his help without asking them anything in return. And this is a quality his sons inherited from him.

Zalman was a nationalist Jew. He prayed in the Zionist synagogue. He interested himself in Zionist work and he financially supported the cause very generously.

Despite his reputation as a folk healer who would use Bankus [glass stuck on the skin that creates suction and draws blood to the spot] and leeches. He also indulged in bleeding people and things of this nature, but he also had a great treasure in real grandmother [folk] remedies.

For instance, spider webs applied to a wound in order to stop blood from flowing, sour milk on a swelling, chamomile for stomach ache, mother's milk for an ear ache.

Religious Jews didn't just rely on Zalman's recipes and grandmother remedies, but they also used their own little means of getting well, like spells against the evil eye, or they would say or sing psalms. They would cry or pray by the open door of the ark. They would leave no stone upturned. They would even travel to the Rabbi with a little order form to beg for a divine remedy.

Zalman, who himself was quite a pious man, succeeded quite a bit in using these religious remedies when his own remedies didn't help quickly enough. Zalman didn't make a whole bunch of money from his medical practice, but he did have a great interest in healing people and he derived satisfaction from that and was happy.

He was a respected person and gave his children a good education and made available opportunities for them to study.

YONEH BORSTEIN

They used to call him Yonele, the Zionist worker, who was always on the run. He was always running to every action or activity, just like a pious Jew to prayer. Each day he came to the headquarters and took new responsibilities upon himself. That which for another person would have been considered a really difficult chore, he gave himself over to it completely and carried it out with tremendous devotion. He spruced up the headquarters, he put sayings up on the wall and inscriptions. He also took a lot of interest in the little Zionist prayer house. He gave a lot of strength and time, together with Zalman Orlovsky, to this prayer house. He wanted it to look good, to have a pleasant appearance, and he devoted a lot of time to that. Often, with his meager earnings, he would spend something for the improvement of the prayer house. He also devoted a lot of time and energy to making sure that the Zionist newspapers, "Today" or "World Mirror", should arrive at their subscribers' doors with regularity. Every day he would run several kilometers to the train station in order to pick up the newspapers. That's how he made his paltry living, but always with a smile. He always had a little joke for everybody. Not everybody knew just how hard things were for him, financially that is. He was somebody who always took part in discussions at Joseph Gilibter's store. He was little and weak, but with a tremendous amount of courage and energy. During the election campaigns, he was busy night and day, writing placards and slogans on behalf of the Zionist list. Thanks to his active work, one of his pals, Shmuel-Nachum Luxenburg, was elected Chairman of the Jewish council from the Zionist organizations.

Yoneleh, with great devotion, took on his chores for the movement.

ZALMAN ORLOVSKY

Zalman came to Demblin from Shedlitz. He quickly became known for his virtues. He prayed in the Guerrer prayer house with his father-in-law, Avromele Feldfeber. There, they asked him to lead prayers, to read the Torah in the synagogue. The prayer house soon became very cramped because there were so many people coming to pray. The youth, who were not religious, from the Zionist organizations, also came to hear his beautiful praying and reading of the Torah. Zalman was no religious fanatic, but he did know a lot. He really had the learning of a Torah scholar. One used to call him, the silken young man. And Avromele Feldfeber, his father-in-law, really took great pride and relished the fine reputation that his son-in-law had acquired for himself.

The Zionist organization elected Zalman as a Chairman, not because they wanted to bestow honor upon him, but because they saw in him really the most appropriate person for the job, at that particular time. His devotion was amazing. Even though he was occupied with his own business, he never held back his time when asked to participate in some action for the organization. And the organization did, at that time, grow rapidly and in a very positive way, developed further. He was valued and respected, even by people who were ideologically opposed to him. He never tried to insult anybody. He just tried in a very calm way to explain the error of people's thinking about matters. People really understood him because he respected the other person's thoughts and feelings. And so when he prayed with his father-in-law in the Guerrer prayer house, nobody thought any of the fact that he wasn't from that Guerrer sect. He was someone who was very well acquainted with the small letters, just like a Torah scholar, and people really said of him, "to God and to other people". And there were stories told about him and also his good deeds in the Demblin ghetto.

YOSEF GELIBTER

Yosef belonged to the old Zionist guard and was an active worker in those days and also during the founding of the organization in 1929 by the younger members. Not thinking of all the energy that he put into it, he served very faithfully and in an admirable way in order to make sure that all of the activities were successful.

His soda water business was a meeting point for the Zionists and also for their opponents. It was kind of a parliament. There people would have debates along party lines and then hear news about what was happening out in the world. Yaacov Faigenboim used to lead a lot of these discussion, he was an activist in the Zionist organizations. Thanks to his presence and his influence, the organization grew greatly in just a short amount of time.

Yosef Gelibter along with Zalman Orlovsky and Yonele Borstein prepared material in the soda-water factory for the lively newspaper, "The Observer" and for the banquet in honor of the departure to Palestine of this writer of these lines in 1933.

Yosef was loved also, by people who were not Zionists. He willingly gave everyone a little bit of advice if they asked. Often he acted as an arbitrator between craftsmen or businessmen. With his keen intelligence, he was always able to come up with some kind of decision or solution so that both sides left feeling content. He was widely respected for his humane way of dealing with everybody. One used to say about Yosef Gilibter in town, that he was the man who was able to come with a compromise. People didn't walk away from his place of business there, feeling dissatisfied, and that's why he was so highly valued.

YEHOSHELE THE BAKER (SHTAMLER)

His bakery was famous for its extremely tasty cakes and bread. Even Christians from the outlying countryside used to come to buy his baked goods. While preparing the braided challah for the Sabbath and High Holy days, Aunt Blume really distinguished herself (Yehoshele's wife). She worked in the bakery together with her husband, my Uncle, and often a lot more than him. When Yehoshele finished his work and went to synagogue for morning prayers, she stood around there and continued to tend the oven and take out the last baked bread. They used to say about her that she was one of the truly worthy and pious women. She also distributed bread and challah without asking for money on the Sabbath to the needy. When she did these good deeds she was very discreet.

During my childhood, on hot summer nights, it was a real pleasure to go to Yehoshele's and get an empty sack of flour and lie down on it in his court yard and go to sleep until midnight. During the winter, when the cold would creep right into your bones, little kids used to climb up on the coal holder. When Aunty pulled out a little bit of cracker, or a roasted potato from the oven, the kids were really in paradise, chomping on it.

[See PHOTO-B40 at the end of Section B]

When the chimney was being cleaned at the bakery by a chimney sweep, we children used to look on with great interest when the chimney sweep would get up on the roof, the rope with the iron bucket wrapped around his neck and one broom in either hand. Yehoshele would stand watching him, very, very frightened, afraid that, God forbid, the man should stumble and fall. After finishing his work, Yehoshele used to invite the sooty chimney sweep into his house and pay him a little tribute with a glass of schnapps. Also, very rare "*piyak*" [wildberry] which the whole town supplied with white sand on the floor. The custom was that after washing the wooden floor and drying it one would scatter white sand over it. Reb Yehoshele, the baker, would get together in one of his store rooms a whole wagon full of the *piyak*. Because of this he received, besides money, a good drink of schnapps. He would ask people for it when they were going to bring another wagon load in.

Friday evening, when the *cholent* was put in the oven, Yehoshele used to hum a little Russian song. He had served in the Russian military for 3 years and even had been in captivity. He was in a much better mood on this occasion. It was a lot easier for him, than when he had to take the *cholent* out of the oven, on the Sabbath, after prayers, because at that point, all of the children and the women used to come to claim their pots. But all of their little markings and tags, like the color of their paper, or a little piece of newspaper they had attached, or ribbon, had all been burned. So everybody was in an uproar, screaming, and nobody knew which pot belonged to who, nobody could agree, nobody would take any

advice, and finally it was agreed that Yehoshele's suggestion should be followed, which was, to lift off the tops of each of these pots and look inside for the real clue to see if inside was *lokshen kugel*, or *challah kugel*, or a gefilte stuffed *kishke*. Of course when one took the lids off these pots, it was the best opportunity for all of the curious women to see what their neighbors had been preparing. Despite all of the signs and all of this research, people walked away with the wrong pots and soon came back to exchange them. And so, Yehoshele took absolutely no pleasure in the Sabbath meal.

Once, in the middle of putting in the cholent, Moshe Hollels showed up, out of breath, panting, and said, "Yehoshele, do me a favor and lend me, well, how shall I say it...lend me a wheel barrow". Yehoshele stood by the oven and wanted to finish his work with the cholent. He looked up in great astonishment and asked, "Moshe, are you going crazy? What are you bothering me for? It's Friday evening, I've got to take care of the cholent here, and I've got to go to the bath house, and you come here, acting all crazy, wanting a wheel barrow. What are you doing here? I don't understand this. On a Friday evening!"

"I have to lead in the Sabbath", he answered.

The yearly feast of the burial society always gave Yehoshele great pleasure and he liked to see it done with a tremendous amount of pomp and ceremony and noise. He worked very hard in the preparation of this feast. He made sure that each member of the group received substantial portions to go back home with him. For this yearly feast, food and drink was prepared in a truly royal manner. Many people looked at these celebrations with a very critical eye. Still, everybody used to pray that there would be more feasts and fewer burials.

On a day like that, Yehoshele shown with the spirit of joy and celebration, because the whole year he struggled hard to make a living and his livelihood had been undermined with Christian bakeries being established in the country side. His children didn't follow the path that he desired and his daughter had to be married off. But on this particular day of the feast of the burial society, he was just as happy as he could be.

With the departure of his older son, Shmuel, with his family, for Palestine, he thought that he would also like to go to the land of his forefathers, but fate had it otherwise. He and his wife Blumela, his son Avrom with his family, Rachel with her family, Raizel and Laibela - all of them were killed by Nazi brutality.

DAVID WASSERMAN

Reb Davidel - that's how he was called with affection, because he was one of the most beautiful personalities in the town. His appearance and his bearing evoked a feeling of respect. A modest person and a person with self restraint, he was a

Modzjitzer Hasid and one of the most learned of them. He prayed in the Modzjitzer prayer house. But on the High Holidays, Reb Gershon Rabinovitch invited Reb Davidel to come and pray at the main synagogue, which at that time would be overflowing because the audience had great pleasure and really loved to hear him sing. His powerful and lyrical voice reached into every corner. The women especially were quite grateful because his singing reached into the balcony where they were singing.

Reb Davidel was somebody who was a supporter of the whole Zionist proposition and more than once he would ask the Jewish youth in Demblin, "What are you doing here? Why don't you go to Israel? Live on the land." And he himself, actually, strove to make Aliyah. When the first group of pioneers from Demblin went to Israel, we received letters from him in which he asked for help.

As I remember, he only spoke Hebrew on the Sabbath. He was also active in the burial society and founded another society of a religious study group. Every Sabbath, before dawn, in summer or winter, Reb Davidel used to be the first one in the synagogue studying. And on Shavuoth, after eating, Reb Davidel would sing in the synagogue the most beautiful melodies by the Modzjitzer Rabbi, and the whole audience would sing along with him.

My father used to tell about how before the First World War, Reb Davidel was the biggest leather merchant in town. He had two houses. But, when the Russians left the town, they burned everything, including everything he owned.

Davidel's wife, Surela, was well known as being a very kind and wonderful person in the town. She helped out people in need very generously, but she always did it in such a way that nobody knew.

Despite the fact that he himself took a tremendous loss when his business and possessions went up in smoke, the couple, Mr. and Mrs. Wasserman, lived with great hope and faith and prepared for the time when they would make their way to Israel. But, the War broke out on the 1st of September, 1939, and that shattered everybody's plans.

Reb Davidel also prayed in the ghetto before the Ark. Yom Kippur of 1941, when Reb Davidel cried out Kol Nidre, the congregation was moved and shared the emotion of his prayer. It was a premonition, he felt, that this was the last time he was going to pray. And the holy prayer was conducted with many tears and a lot of weeping.

The 6th of May, 1942, the Modzjitzer scholar shared the tragic fate of the mass of Jews in Demblin and went off on the final road.

Honored be his memory!

SHMUEL (ORALIS) RUBINSTEIN

BY ARYE BUCKSPAN, TEL AVIV

Shmuel Oralis (Rubinstein) was a religious Jew, a scholar and a lover of study. He was interested only in Torah studies. He spent his days sitting at the Guerr shtieble studying, from dawn to evening.

His wife Mechala was old. She worked at home and managed a store for selling lye to support them both. I wondered many times how a sick woman like her, whose hands and head shook in a strange spasm, could control so many customers and manage the store so intelligently. Sometimes on the days of the fair (Wednesdays), I would help her when the store was full. If she became ill, the store would shut down because her husband was absorbed by his studies. Every Friday Shmuel Oralis went to the mikve and prepared for the Sabbath. Since he believed that he should not see the face of a woman, he would turn to the wall and shout, "a shirt, a towel", until he received what he asked for.

With him we -- my brother in-law Ya'acov Rosenberg, myself and a few other boys -- studied Torah. He taught us, because we were known as good students, and belonged to the same Guerr Shtieble. He did not charge us for studying, doing his work as a mitzvah.

His son Alter did not practice Judaism, and according to his father's terms, he was a complete heathen. He was caught in the Communist idea and wanted to bring salvation to the world, while at the same time not bringing salvation to himself. First he traveled to Brazil, where he tried to write for a Yiddish newspaper and held some odd jobs. He did not succeed. He married Chana Ziegelman, an active member of Poale Tzion Left, and with her moved to Demblin.

The Demblin boys had their first Torah lessons with a Jew named Reb Zeidel. He taught using a leather whip and according to the method of putting one to stand in the corner. Later they continued their studies with Reb Leibel. He used to test his students by bringing them to the town's prominent figures, who would question them. If the boys succeeded, they won much praise. The older kids continued their studies with Reb Sanna the teacher. He would teach the boys Torah, and his wife would take advantage of the kids for helping her at home. All those teachers lived by the Great Synagogue.

Moshe Hillels (Anglister), a pleasant Jew, had talents for everything except for a making a livelihood. He was a carving artist, and adept in woodworking in general. He knew how to paint very well, and was even a Hebrew and math teacher. Nevertheless he lived in great poverty. He was lucky not to need much.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY NEAR AND DEAR ONES

BY BAILA SHAPIRO-BRANDSHPIGEL / PARIS

Memories about the town mean for me, first of all, memories about her people, the dear, warm hearted Jews who the brutes in Hitler's army killed so savagely.

The following lines I truly dedicate to the memory of my near and dear ones, family and friends from my youth.

My mother, Chana Shapiro, didn't have very much luck in her life. At the age of 30 she was left a widow with 7 children. When the German brutes took Demblin, she had to witness the murder of her children and grandchildren until she alone remained a victim of the beasts. The same tragic fate was shared by my brother and his wife and children and grandchildren. My brother, Moshe, with his wife Blumtshe, the good Golda, as well as my wise sister, Yehudis with her little boy.

My mother, Chana Shapiro, had very little luck in her life. When I was 30 years old I left Demblin and emigrated to France. Although it was tough to make a living we still felt like free people compared to the way we felt back in Poland. With the outbreak of the Second World War, my husband signed up voluntarily in the French army and he was taken prisoner by the Germans. After he was liberated, he was not with us again for a very long time. The 14th of May, 1941, they took him, along with the first 5,000 Jews from France. After detaining him for 14 months in a camp, the 27th of June, 1942, he was deported to Auschwitz and that's where he died. I remained with my 2 children, one 5 1/2 years old and the other 15 days old. We were blessed with a miracle because all three of us survived after a lot of sorrow and a lot of need and hardship in that terrifying period.

I remember also, so many of the friends from our youth with whom we struggled together, dreamed together, hoped together - in the union of workers and in the library, different kinds of organizations, in the drama circle, Yarme Vanapol, Malka Baitzman, Freida Ainshidler, the Baigelmans, Yisrael Yom-Tov, David Cholevinsky, Yankel Bubis, Hindele Birentzvieg, Avraham Rozenzaft, the Apelhoitz, Shloma Mekler, Ben-Tzion Kaminsky, Nuach and Chaya Zamdner, Hadassa and Socher Rappaport, Tzaduk Yom-Tov.

Honored be their memory.

NUACH EKHEIZER

BY TZVI EICHENBRENNER / TEL AVIV

"Nuach - he was always a saint". He was thought of among his town's people as one of the most luminous personalities in that dark era of the destruction of our people. His bearing and conduct in the camps in Demblin and in Czenstechov and his readiness to help, demonstrated that even in the most terrible conditions of enslavement and brutality one dare not lose sight of the image of God. The sinfulness of that era did not change him for the worse in any way.

All of the painful pressures and sorrows in the camps moved him very deeply although he personally wasn't the one who was suffering. He felt pain for other people. That's why he attempted to bring about some kind of opposition to comfort those who found themselves in deep sorrow and to encourage with a good word those who were resigned and in desperation.

Whenever he had the slightest opportunity, Nuach would sabotage the work that was being done for the Germans, and he would tell other people to do likewise. In order to rescue a young Jewish boy from a certain death in the camp, he risked his own life. His humane conduct didn't please everybody and his good deeds became known to one of the lower echelon officers, Kattinger. That beast, one morning very early, when the group of workers had already left the gate of the camp on the way to their work place, stopped everybody and went directly to Nuach, and with his whip he began to strike him in the face and on his body. The erect posture of Nuach and his refusal to even blink his eye and his proud silence only drove on the German to increase his sadism, which only quieted down when Nuach lay covered with blood, beaten to a pulp, stretched out on the ground. These blows left a familiar mark on the health and mood of Nuach for the rest of his life. He always suffered from head aches.

In Czenstechov I was with Nuach once again. The 15th of January of 1945, the Red Army neared Czenstechov and the Germans began to evacuate our camp. Sick Nuach dared to escape in a terrible frost and 2 days later he was liberated by the Russians.

He made aliya to Israel. When the Germans decided to give reparations to those who had been in the camps for their forced labor and their suffering, Nuach was one of the only refugees who refused to take advantage of German money. He complained that the very name that they'd given to the undertaking, "To Make Good Once Again", was enough for a Jew to refuse it. It made absolutely no impression on him no matter how much you argued. He remained firm in his decision and never took advantage of the reparations.

The place of his death is also symbolic and appropriate to the place that he occupied in life. He died in the building of the Israeli highest court during a trial in Jerusalem. All of a sudden he felt very sick and died very quickly.

Honored be his memory!

[See PHOTO-B41 at the end of Section B]

SHMUEN "THE HOARSE ONE"

Once upon a time when one walked down the long stone paved Warshavsky street which reached from one end of the city to the other, one saw on both sides, little wooden houses as if in a big circle. In each little house, one was able to look in and with precision say in which of them lived the figs, the sourcreams, the petticoats, the rats, the noodles, the matzos, the rattles, the stallions, and so on and so forth. They were all very worthy, honest Jews, working folk, their family names had nothing offensive about them. Basically each person in the town had their family name and that's how you knew them and that's how you called their children and their grandchildren, as well. From where these names came, most of the people had no idea. In the same way lots of the towns and villages didn't know where their names came from. For example, the people in Warsaw were known as "*fresers*" [people who ate a lot], the people in Chelm were known to be fools, the people in Kotzker - blockheads, Koriv - creepers, Ryki - slurpers, Baranov - made cake in a bad way...

In one of these little houses lived Shmuen, the hoarse one. He was called that not because the Jew was really so hoarse that he actually wasn't able to speak. On the contrary, Shmuen had a clear, beautiful voice. And on the Sabbath when he would pray psalms in the synagogue, it was really a great pleasure to listen to him. He was a very modest man and when people used to argue about something, Shmuen wasn't one to join in. He didn't really like to get mixed up in arguments and discussions. He listened but he kept silent. He would never, with even one word, call attention to himself. That's the way he acquired his name, "Shmuen, the hoarse one".

Shmuen was blessed by God with three fine sons and a wise wonderful daughter. When she was grown up just a little bit, she would write little letters for all of the women in the town to their relatives in America. Her letters were better than the professional letter writers.

But getting a full belly was something that Shmuen couldn't provide for his family. After all, how could he accomplish that since the whole living that he made was from each summer's excursion to a little orchard that he rented from a peasant? He would load up his few belongings on a wagon and sit his wife and children on

the wagon and he would go off there for the whole summer. There they lived in a little straw structure and even in the heaviest rains when it thundered and there was lightening, they didn't leave that spot until everything had been harvested. That was usually right around the beginning of the High Holy days.

When one would talk to Shmuen, he never complained about his hard life. He had no complaints to God. The only thing that he used to complain about was that he was never able, as he was obliged to do as a Jew, to really pray with conviction, because all the little gentile boys, in the countryside, knew that when this Jew would start praying, the whole world could turn upside down and he wouldn't move from the spot. When Shmuen was standing in his tallit and tefillin, by a tree, and saying the *Shemona Esrai* [18 benedictions], the gentile boys would appear out of nowhere, like a plague of locusts attacking the orchard. However much Shmuen tried to concentrate on his prayers, his mind would always start to wander and this made him feel very bad.

When his children were grown up and emigrated, when the little orchard which they used to rent had been chopped down, Shmuen remained with his wife and daughter and also without a means of support. Every morning, summer and winter, he and his wife Kraindel went to the countryside to get a couple of big cans of milk, and they took them back to sell the contents of them in town.

Once early in the morning, when they were both passing with their cans of milk through a little forest near the lakes, a Polish officer with some armed soldiers stopped them on a pretext that they were spies. They stripped them naked, searched them, they poured the milk out and they examined the empty milk cans, and of course you understand they didn't find anything. Then they started to beat up the poor couple, sadistically tortured them and abandoned them.

From then on Shmuen became sick and lay in bed until he died. Once his wife, Kraindel, came into our house weeping and called my father to her husband. A group of other neighbors also went to Shmuen, who was barely able to talk. With them he said his final prayers and soon afterwards he gave up his pure soul.

THE SENDWITZER FAMILY

BY MENDEL GOLDSTEIN / RECHOVOT

The Sendwitzer family was one of the most well known families in Demblin. All of the men were very pious and learned Jews and the Chelm Rabbi, Reb Gamliel, originated from the same family.

My father was called Gadlihu, my mother, Rashe. My brother, Hershel, was my twin. My sister, Devoshke, and a younger brother, Yitzhak. My father had a sister, Leah and her husband, Hershel. I had a grandmother, Raizel, and a grandfather, Hershel.

Among the other family members: the Rabbi Gamliel Hoffman, his brother, Sholem, and his wife Raizel, with their children, Maitel, Gamliel, Pesach and Tzviling Hershel and Fofi; Moshe with his wife and their sons, Gamliel and Yankel, a daughter Aidis. They had two sons, Yone and Yosel, who died in America. The other brother, Mordechai died in 1938.

From the whole family, there remained myself, the only one of Gadlihu's children, Yankel's wife Dovre, who lives in America with a son, Gamliel and a daughter, Naomi; Shlome's two daughters, Toyve and Leah; Moshe's two daughters, Elka and Rashke in America.

REB DAVID BEN-SHMUEN ZILBERMAN (FAHKERS)

BY MOSHE WASSERMAN

A religious, well to do Jew, who, with dignity and honesty, made his living from a store which sold food. He never refused to give alms to a Jew who needed it. He also provided food stuffs for the Kojenitzer Rabbi. Being himself a Kojenitzer Hasid, he did business with the Hasidim who had traveled from afar, who were going to see the Rabbi for holidays, or just on a weekday.

His wife, Sureka, who took care of business while he was away, found time to help others, or to help the poorest of brides and never complained that it was too hard to do anything like that.

Although his children were drawn to a religious spirit, that did not stop them from being among the founders and being very active in Zionist organizations. True, the pious Reb David, did not look with great favor on the Zionist activity of his children, and would even say once and a while something like, "The Messiah is not going to bring you to Israel before the appropriate time. With all your little pennies you're dropping in your pushke there, you're not going to liberate Israel". But, he didn't make any serious attempt to thwart their activities. When the youngest son, Benyomin, made aliya to Palestine in 1934, he sent for his father. And Reb David went to the Rabbi to get his advice and the Rabbi gave his blessing.

Walking around the streets of Tel Aviv, Reb David was astonished to see the Jewish workers who were building a factory in a new world. It was as if a new world was being revealed to him. The same young folks who, from the Jewish towns in Poland, here were creating and building their own land, working the fields, drying the swamps. He saw that he, like many Jews like him, with his upbringing and experience, had made a mistake.

His striving was to be with his children and to help his daughter, Leah, and her husband and her child, Surele, to emigrate to Israel, as well as to help his oldest son, Chaim, but unfortunately, all of these efforts were not successful. He traveled back to Poland in order to make all these arrangements for them, so that the whole family could travel together to Palestine, but, the outbreak of the Second World War brought all their dreams to nothing, and he was killed by the Nazis.

Honored be his memory!

THE ROAD OF HER LIFE - ONLY GOOD DEEDS
(To the memory of my unforgettable mother, Miriam Amitz)

BY ZEHAVA AMITZ

In each place where the groan of a hungry person was heard or of the needy or of sick Jews, Miriam would show herself and truly bring comfort and help, a good word. On behalf of her good heart and selflessness to those people who were suffering, people would call her with a lot of affection, "Marmu".

I remember blind Joseph with his family. My mother gave so much attention to them that we thought that they were actually part of our family. His children and wife were in our house day and night. When one of the children became sick, and that was fairly often because they weren't in great health, Marmu would bring with her Zalman Feltcher, and afterwards, his son, Yarmeyohu. She also spent a lot of time on recipes she would cook up, a spoonful of something that was good to eat for them.

Generally my mother would respond and pay attention to everybody who needed her help. But those sick and hungry who somehow she didn't know about would find her, knowing that this person would not disappoint them.

The War years came and the ghetto and with them the persecutions and the indescribable need. In that horrible epic, my mother lived only for others. She would put together a big bag to fill with stuff, and from early in the morning she was off to the houses of people who still were doing fairly well and she'd beg there for food for the hungry and people who just couldn't take care of themselves.

She had to move my grandparents into the camp because they had been hidden for a whole week in a cellar in the deserted ghetto. Marimu was very broken up as a result of the beating of her husband during the deportation. Nevertheless she didn't let her parents get lost, she took good care of them, and was successful in bringing them into the ghetto, thanks to the efforts of my mother in persuading Polish workers who were employed at the airfield. She was, for a high price, able to save grandma and grandpa. Because of their age, they were not able to work and if you couldn't work, you didn't receive your portion of food, so my mother had to worry and figure out how, in the conditions that existed in the camp, to get them something to eat everyday. My sisters and I helped as well. Frequently we were able to bring in a little bit of potato or a little bit of greens.

Grandpa died in the camp in the summer of 1943, however, grandma was fortunate enough to live to see the liberation. If she, just like I, remained alive, it was due in great measure to the energy and effort of my blessed mother. At that

time my brother-in-law was sick from typhus. It was only thanks to the incredible efforts of my mother that he got back on his feet again.

After the War, fate paid her back for the years of suffering and pain. She settled in Vienna, and there, as well, she did not remain with her hands folded. She was active in most of the Jewish social organizations and institutions and also took care of Demblin Jews in Poland and in Israel, which land she visited twice.

She died in Vienna on the 6th of March, 1965 - and her whole life was a long chain of wonderful deeds.

THE MEMORY OF ALTER AND BINA-RACHEL FRIEDMAN

BY CHAYA GOLDFARB / TEL AVIV

Alter Friedman the ritual slaughterer and his wife, my father's sister, Bina-Rachel, were people whose home was always open and they were very open hearted people. Their hearts were open to the poor as well as to the rich. A hungry person who stepped over their threshold would soon leave having eaten well and feeling quite content. From his profession of killing animals in a kosher way, he did not make a lot of money. His wife helped out by sewing. This help wasn't only for their own family, but also for strangers and for the needy among Demblin's Jews.

She had 6 children, 5 sons and a daughter, and lots of grandchildren. Three sons took over their father's profession and became kosher butchers, the daughter, Royza-Mindel died before the outbreak of the War and left orphaned 2 children, Tova and Chaya. The oldest son Shmuel and also Yaacov, Berel and Motel were killed during the deportation. The youngest unmarried son, Yisrael, was taken to the Demblin ghetto where he worked until the last night before liberation. And then the Nazis took him to Germany and killed him there. That's how a whole family was destroyed.

Honored be their memory!

REB YAACOV APELHOT

BY YITZHAK APELHOT / FRANKRAICH

In the town we called him Yankel Serolishes (Yaacov son of Yisrael). He was quite a Talmud scholar. Despite his attachment to more traditional religion he was well respected among circles of Jewish youth who had chosen a course that took them away from tradition. They respected him and they liked him because of his wisdom and because of his seriousness.

The young people who hung around the synagogue and studied there, who were influenced by his personality, called him "Baal Midot". When he would meet with young people who were leaving the synagogue and the life of the synagogue, he would plead with them to "Just remember something to take with you from the synagogue on your new road". The something was some kind of strength to draw upon in the face of disappointments out in the world.

His interest in the poor and suffering from all strata of society was well known.

On Sabbath before Passover of 1940, German soldiers shot his 17 year old daughter, Esther, quite a wonderful and pretty young girl, while she was taking a walk with her friend, the daughter of Yisrael-David Zusman. Her friend was wounded. Yaacov Apelhot worked with his sorrow by devoting greater activity for the poor and the unfortunate refugees from Warsaw and Pulaw, who had been brought to Demblin.

In 1942-1943 scores of Jews who had been trying to get out of other places, ended up at the Demblin train station, thinking that they could have some kind of a haven. They were murdered by the Germans. These were primarily people who were coming from Warsaw. Yaacov Apelhot was active in seeing to their burial.

In the beginning of 1942, Hersh Faiershtein was arrested because he wouldn't give a certain sum of money to the Jewish council, who demanded it of him. The next day the Germans shot him. This is, it seems, the first instance of the shooting of a Jew in the city at the instigation of the Jewish council.

At that point a meeting was called with 20 Jews, in the house of Yichzakei Rubenstein. A delegation was chosen with Yaacov Apelhot at its head and its mission was to go and deal with the chairman of the Jewish council. Reb Yaacov demanded from the Jewish council that they take into account the words of the Rambam, which are that Jewish leaders need to feel responsible and guilty when great sorrow comes to fellow Jews, and when they are able to somehow influence the disposition of the sentence.

He never showed any favoritism to rich or poor. He always treated people with respect. He was always a person who spoke the truth without fear.

Before the War, once a year, he would travel to the Rabbi in Sokolov (that Rabbi being a grandson of the old Kotzker Rabbi). Coming home he said, "I've looked after myself for a year, truly".

The 6th of May, 1942, together with 4,000 Jews from our town, he was sent to Sobibor and there killed.

YARMEYOHU VANAPOL (YARME)

BY S. PERELMUTER

He was a remnant of an earlier generation, but someone who looked forward with his socialist orientation, humanitarian, even to the point of great self sacrifice, who didn't demand even honor or pay for his work on behalf of the community.

Yarme was the son of Zalman Feldsher, who gave medical help to the population of Demblin for 50 years. He died in the 30's. At the funeral the whole Jewish population showed up from Demblin as well as many Christians who he had healed.

His son, Yarme, who could hardly be called a folk doctor, was well known for his medical work in the surrounding areas. I knew of cases of when he was called by the military doctor, Major Peshegulinski. He was asked to help with medical problems when there were several doctors in Demblin, military and civilian. He enjoyed the greatest trust among the Jewish population as well as the Christian population because of his good heart, his devotion, his down to earth quality and his substantial material help for each needy, sick person.

Yarmeyohu Vanapol was an institution in himself. His caring for the sick, who's problems he paid attention to with the greatest seriousness, extended to the whole family of the sick person. All poor were his patients. Besides medical help they received money from him to buy prescriptions at the pharmacist. And not just once did he also give them a few dollars for a poor pair of shoes. If he was looking after a poor patient he never waited to be called back by that patient for another visit but the very next morning he would go himself to find out what the patient's condition was. He would take a sincere interest in the economic condition of the patient's family. If it was necessary he would give them money as well. In this way he cared for both Jews and Christians without any distinction. Big and small remembered his name with the greatest respect.

Shortly after the outbreak of the War, he was sent by the Polish regime to Kartuz-Bereza (concentration camp), apparently because someone had made an accusation about him that he was an adherent to Communism. And he never came back to Demblin.

AVRAHAM ABRAMOWITZ AND YOSEF-NATA CHOLEWINSKI

BY CHAIM GOLDBERG / RAMAT-AVIV

Two Jewish lads, one a hat maker and the other the son of a shoemaker. Both of them grew up in homes of poor working people who had a lot of children and not very much to eat. Both of them worked very hard to help with the family's income. From a very young age both of them grew into the family of workers in Demblin. Both of them were quite familiar with the sorrows that people had to endure. Both dreamed of a better tomorrow, of socialist justice and peaceful coexistence among individuals and people.

With everything they had, they gave themselves to the fight with the struggle against the pre-war regime in Poland. Both of them in their youth belonged to the Communist movement. Both of them were the first to get arrested from our town. Both of them felt on their own skin the savagery of the home police in Pulaw and later in Lublin prison. Both of them were held in great affection by the workers of Demblin and the surrounding towns. Very often they had to hide and couldn't sleep at home in order to avoid arrest. These two fragile youths carried on their shoulders a great part of the professional and cultural work in the town. Neither of them lived to receive the most basic education. But with the great strength of spirit and great amount of mother wit and wisdom of life, they improved themselves in their command of language and became like two twin brothers. Their word was always listened to with the greatest attention and taken very seriously and honored. Almost 20 years they lived and were active in our ranks.

At the outbreak of the second world war, Avram Avramowitz went to Russia and there he survived and came back to Lodz. In 1950 he died of a heart attack. He left two sons. Yosef-Nata Cholewinski was killed by the Nazi wretches in Bialystok.

Honored be their memory!

[See PHOTO-B42 at the end of Section B]

IN MEMORY OF THE MARTYRS OF THE SHTAMLER FAMILY

BY YITZHAK SHTAMLER / TEL AVIV

Until the 1st of September, 1939, we were a big family in Demblin, a beautiful tree with many branches and twigs... Until, that is, the falling of the dark night of Nazism, when this tree was torn up by its roots. Just little bits of the broad branched family remains, thanks to the fact that in the year 1935, a portion of the family made aliya to Palestine. Others wandered overseas and in that way they were spared falling into the bestial German hands.

Our family consisted of parents and 7 children. Our father was called Yehusha Shtamler. But he was more familiarly known as Shayeles Becker because our bakery was one of the oldest in town. There, my mother and sisters were also employed. Usually my father was occupied with community affairs and he was a leader in the community. He was also a member of the burial society and president of the free clinic and he worked in the credit union. He was the chairman of the small businessman's union. He was a Guerrer Hasid and he dreamed of Palestine.

My mother was called Blimele [little flower], she was truly a saint, a very pious woman, very devoted to her children and her husband and also to other people. She had a mental chart about all of her customers and this came in handy, especially on Fridays. She was able to make note of who came in for their bread and their challah on the Sabbath, and who didn't. If a customer didn't show up, she herself went to their house and brought them bread and challah, not wanting that any Jewish family, God forbid, should go hungry on the Sabbath. She knew that a Jew like that would be ashamed to come and ask her to take it on credit or to have her write it down in her book. Frequently mother would send me to shy customers like that because she herself didn't always have the time to track everybody down. I want to emphasize that Jewish Demblin had many, many men and women who were like that.

My oldest brother Shmuel is today in Israel with his family. My second brother, Avrom, with his wife and three children were killed by the Nazis. My sister, Raizel, was the kind of the person who ran the household. She was a very good hearted woman. She had great capacity for work. She too died during the Hitler invasion. My sister Rachel as well, with her husband and child, died as martyrs. My brother, Binyomen, saved himself from the Demblin camp and today lives in Israel. My brother Yitzhak fled to Russia when the War broke out and for 3 1/2 years he fought in the ranks of the Red Army against the Nazi beasts. He today is in Israel with his family.

The youngest of the Shtamler family was called Laibela. He was working in forced labor at the train station and a German threw him from a moving train car and he broke his leg. It's possible that if it were not for this tragic incident, he would still be alive.

Such a sorrowful account of the family of Yehoshe and Bluma Shtamler and their seven children.

We will always remember our martyrs!

IMMORTALIZING MY PARENTS, SISTERS AND BROTHERS

BY AVRAHAM SHULMAN / BRAZIL, BELGIYA

I, in my early childhood, left my hometown of Demblin-Modzjitz. Because of that I don't remember a lot about the social life of the town, the different parties, the different kinds of things that were going on. However, the memories of my parents, my mother less, because she died when I was very, very young and of my sisters and brothers, is deeply engraved in my memory.

[See PHOTO-B43 at the end of Section B]

My mother died when I was just a small child. But I remember her as being a very pretty woman and a very good hearted mother, good hearted not only to her children but also to strangers. My father wasn't a rich person but he was well respected and a very dignified man. He was very simple but he also had a lot of wit. He had an extraordinary sense of trust. He was a person who people had great faith in. He was extremely devoted to his children. He strove, so that his children would always keep each other in mind and be devoted to one another.

After the death of my mother, he remained with 5 young children. But he didn't remarry. That's because he didn't want his little children to suffer from a stepmother. He often went to see the Modzjitzer Rabbi who he would discuss many questions with. I remember how once during the High Holidays, many Hasidim came to see the Modzjitzer Rabbi from other places, and my father sent us children to sleep with neighbors so that he could welcome into his house the Hasidim who had traveled from afar, and who were his friends.

My father had a very difficult time eking out a living, nevertheless, he never stopped thinking about other people. Even when we didn't have what we really needed for a proper Sabbath for ourselves, my father would invite a stranger to our table. His house was open to anybody. When he died the whole city of Jews showed up including the children from the religious school.

I remember a lot about my sisters and brothers. What I do remember is that my brother, Serolke (Yisrael), was a good and pious young man who gave my father a lot of satisfaction. From my sisters I remember the eldest well, Brocha, who became the person who raised me after the death of my mother. In general, the children were very devoted to each other. And in my memory their names are deeply engraved: Serolke, Rachel-Leah, Esther, Brocha, Miriam, Baila and her family.

Honored be the memory of these devoted, unforgettable martyrs!

IN DEFENSE OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL

ALEXANDER KESTENBOIM (ARMON), zal

AL HAMISHMAR DAILY (Newspaper)

Alex was born in Demblin, Poland, on March 31, 1941. The days were of the Second World War and Poland was being trampled under the Nazi boot. He spent the first three years of his childhood with his family in the camp. In 1945, his family left the camp and started rebuilding its life. In 1950 he made aliyah to Israel with his family. After several years in Tel Aviv, he joined the Ayalah group in the educational institution of Kibbutz Yad Shmuel.

After graduating from high school, he was conscripted to the Israel Defense Forces and served five years in the Air Force. After the service, he returned to his kibbutz and worked in the orchards.

He died in the skies of Sinai on the first day of the Six-Day War, June 5, 1967.

He is survived by his wife Ada and daughter Ofrit.

[See PHOTO-B44 at the end of Section B]

*

Gan Shmuel was his last stop, his home. He matured among trees. From the confines of the kibbutz he went outwards to the open, under its skies he made a dream, years before he fell, to spread his wings. The skies called him, and he came. A boy in an iron bird. His mighty wings protected the borders. His thundering whistle was its protecting wall. He would wander up there, playing with the stars and smiling at their bright blue color. Then the skies darkened and hung above in threat. When he received his orders, he flew forth. Silently. Riding in the sky, the wide skies of the land that arose to fight its battle. Breathing from the heavens, he broke through its borders to beat the enemy. He answered the call when it was still dawn, and by daylight he was still spitting fire. He asked no more than that. When he returned, his fate was already doomed. The desert sands sparkled white and a great sun was rising. For a moment the earth took him to her bosom, then covered him forever. His friends did not bury him. He joined his forefathers somewhere in the silent, bright open of Sinai.

THE MARTYRED CHILD ALEK KESTENBOIM

BY HADASSA EICHENBRENNER / RAMAT-GAN

Among the ninety of so children, who in that dark and savage time were kept in the Dembliner camp, were found Dr. Kestenboim's three little children. The youngest of them, Alek, was three years old then. The first time I saw the child was in the summer of 1943, during the fourth year of the War.

Our horrific camp became worse and more hopeless. The news that reached us was terrifying and filled us with horror. The two big camps, Travnek and Poniatow were liquidated together with thousands of Jews who on certain days were murdered in the most savage way. As usual at a time like that, one's heart never stopped beating with fear. We already knew then that all the Jews were destined to be killed. Fear of death was so great that each moment seemed it was just about now, now, and our camp would be surrounded and we would be liquidated. When we went back at the end of the day after work, feeling very desperate, along the wire fence that was along the side of the camp, inside I used to see little Alek. He would always stick his little head through the barbed wire. Very carefully we pushed his little head back inside, without getting him caught in the sharp barbs, and then we would continue on our way. But as soon as we took a couple more steps, we noticed that there he was with his head stuck out, through the barbed wire, sticking out the other side of it.

The second time that I saw little Alek was in July 1944 when the Red Army had made its way across the river Bug, and with nothing stopping it, chased the retreating Nazi German forces who were in great chaos. They wanted to make it to the other bank of the Vistula river. The Russians had taken Lublin and were approaching Koriv, 35 kilometers from our camp. It's impossible to tell you the anticipation we felt. It just electrified the whole camp. We thought we were going to be saved any minute. The majority of us simply couldn't sleep at night. We waited for the great moment when the Russians would come in and liberate us. Around two in the morning, though, we heard shooting. And then it became quiet. The whole night and the next day, almost the whole day, a strange quietness and silence prevailed. And then, around five in the afternoon, the sounds of artillery began again. In a great, great hurry, the Germans started to drive all the Jews from our camp into rail road cars, under the strictest supervision. Never the less, 70 people managed to escape. But after a hunt carried out by the Polish Nationalist A.K. army, only four people remained of the 70. Some of them had been chopped up with hatchets.

Because of the condition of the train tracks, our particular train had to remain in the train station for a very long time. We were in half open rail road cars, packed together, in an unbelievable way, very tightly. When it began to rain, we were

soaked through to the bone. The whole way we were very, very closely guarded by soldiers. Although they had told us in Demblin, they would take us to work in Czenstechov, we were terrified they were going to take us to Auschwitz. At night our train stopped again at a big, unlit station which was packed with lots of military people and civilians who were evacuating in great fear of the Russians. Almost the whole night we remained on the tracks without moving from where we were. In order that it shouldn't be discovered that this particular transport was made up of Jews, we had to stay very, very quiet for hours, packed in together in the rail cars, until we fell asleep beneath a thick rain shower. We woke up seeing the light of lanterns that somebody held over our heads. In the weak shine of the lantern, in the half darkness, I saw that a Polish rail road worker stood over us.

"Jews?", he asked quietly, as if he was afraid that somebody might hear him.

"Yes" - we responded in the same hushed voice.

"From where?"

"Demblin", we responded.

"I see. You still have children with you." He said, surprised. "Apparently it didn't go so bad for you people in Demblin", he said in a very biting way. He lowered the lantern and said, "Well, got to go, this train car you're on is going to start moving out pretty soon".

"How do you know that?" I asked him.

"How do I know? Because I'm the engineer of the train."

Now I caught his meaning. "Maybe you can tell us where we're going."

"You're going to Czenstechov", he answered.

It's really, really difficult to convey the joy that we felt when we heard that word Czenstechov. We became more hopeful. A woman who sat on the floor, wrapped up in a blanket, asked him if he knew if they were going to take us to work in a factory there, what kind of factory.

The engineer asked us in turn in a very surprised way, "You think really they're taking you people to go to work? They're taking you to kill you, to a cemetery, that's where you're going".

"What do you mean we're going to a cemetery."

"They're going to take you there to make hamburgers out of you," the engineer said and went away.

For the rest of the journey the collective terror we felt didn't let up for a moment. Our train slowly traveled to Czenstechov and remained among the long rows of Ukrainians with drawn rifles, ready to shoot, from both sides of the tracks. That was enough for us to understand the nature of the new hell we had fallen into.

We heard a brutal scream, "Get down!" And immediately there was a stampede. The biggest part of our numbers who had brought a few little items with them, left everything in the cars. They drove us immediately through a gate of a high stone wall with sharp, iron spikes on top of it. To one side a broad river flowed. Inside we saw Ukrainians with machine guns, on the roofs, aiming at us. In the square, where they packed us all in together, the police began to sort us out, to make fun of us and to beat us up. Families were quickly separated. People begged they should leave them on one side or the other side, the side with their relatives, but they got smacked with rifle butts for their trouble.

In the middle of the square, the murderer, Bartelshlager, stood on kind of a podium, and in a very loud voice ordered, "All crafts people step out". Four hundred men stepped out in a separate row to be sent away. Each time the murderer drank something from a silver beaker which a Jewish policeman, who stood next to him, would refill from a flask and hand to him again.

Suddenly the whole square was transformed into an even worse and more terrifying hell than before, women went into convulsions, wept, tore their hair and their own faces. One of them threw herself on the earth and beat herself in the face and the head with her fists.

"What's happening?" I asked Moshe Ekheiser, who stood near me looking extremely desperate and wringing his hands.

"You haven't heard about the tragedy?". Almost crying, he screamed, "The children, they're going to take all the children away and shoot them. The twenty children from the first transport, which they brought here a week ago from Demblin aren't going to live very much longer. Go ahead, you'll see, they've already taken all of Dr. Kestenboim's children away. There they are, they're sitting over there!". And he pointed in their direction with his hand.

When I was able to make my way through the desperate and packed in crowd, I saw Dr. Kestenboim rush by me, his face flushed, almost crazy. I asked him if everything that Ekheiser had told me was true, and he couldn't even answer me. He just looked at me with his tearful eyes and pointed with his glance to the ground and ran away. On the ground, on a spread out blanket, I saw little Alek, who looked like a young, naked little bird. He was curled up with his hands held

downward like little wings that were hanging down and hadn't had a chance to grow. He sat on the ground with his older brother and sister, all three of them, left there ready to be taken away. They understood exactly what was going to happen and they sat there trembling with the fear of death.

On the same day they took me to a second camp. I learned later that afterwards, Alek, with the other children in our transport, were separated out from their parents and held up in a barracks for several days. Afterwards, they were led to the cemetery, but as in the time of great terrifying crimes, there also were unbelievable miracles. With a huge amount of money and gems of their rich parents, it was possible to save them by bribing the murderer Bartelshlagger. Alek, with the other children, were brought back to their parents at the camp, and there they were liberated at the end of the War.

*

The third time that I saw Alek was 20 years later, in 1965, in Ramat-Gan.

Once I rang the door bell of the residence of Dr. Kestenboim, who opened the door of his house, I saw a young, handsome and sympathetic looking officer of the Israeli air force. Some very strange emotion crept over me and remained, and I couldn't take my eyes from the young officer. "Isn't this one of the Doctor's sons?", I thought to myself. The Doctor who noticed my uncertainty said to me:

"Yes, that's my Alek".

"Alek, a flyer?" I was astounded and I blurted it out.

"Yes, yes", the Doctor answered. "That's what he wanted to do."

As always, when we former *Katzetnik* [inmates] who went through that experience get together, we began to talk about those dark times. Alek sat by quietly without a word, but very attentive, and listened to each word. And as we were talking about things, it seemed as if he were reliving things. I noticed this because I'd see the slightest kind of change in his facial expression, and the color in his face change. Afterwards I knew, that was the last time I'd ever see him.

Two years later, in 1967, the Arab nations, under the leadership of Egypt, wanted to annihilate Israel and wipe it off the face of the earth.

Alek, who, since his childhood, had been filled with hatred for those who would annihilate his people, that early morning on the 5th of June, 1967, took off in his airplane, he flew over the enemies' territory, took part in the most dangerous combat and wiped out several snake nests.

Almost in the last minute of the Six Day War, when the enemy lay shattered, the Kestenboim family received terrible news. Returning after carrying out one of the most important missions of the War, Alek's plane crashed somewhere and was destroyed.

And thus, Alek, the little child in the concentration camp, was sacrificed 22 years later. He sacrificed his young life in defending the Jewish land and he died a heroic death.

THE PARATROOPER SHMAIYE SHAYEVITCH, zal

[See PHOTO-B45 at the end of Section B]

Born on April 18, 1948. Fell in battle during an action in the Beit She'an Valley on September 19, 1968. He was graduated with honors from Tet High School of Yad Eliyahu, Tel Aviv. He fought in the Six-Day War, in the Karame operation and in other first-class military operations. In the IDF, as in his studies, he excelled, being devoted and responsible.

As a fifth-grader, he wrote several compositions. One of them was about Channah Senesh. As an award, he received a free pass from Habimah Theater for a year.

The following is a passage from his composition "The Devotee is Not for Self-Pity", which was published in Volume 32 of *Ha'aretz Shelanu* [a weekly magazine for the youth] in 1960:

A passerby walks by the yeshiva and sees a devoted student. He thinks: why would this young boy, in his childhood, have to work his mind so hard studying Torah? Most people think like him. But the devoted student does not think so. He praises himself for learning so willingly, does not see the secular life around him, and does not hear what is said about him. The devoted student sees the letters of the Torah sparkle before his eyes, attracting him in magic. He is happy with what he has; he looks forward to completing his studies and returning to his home wearing the crown of Torah.

By Shmaiye Shayevitch, Sixth grade, Zvi Shapira School

OUR SON SHMAIYE SHAYEVITCH

THE SUFFERING PARENTS MICHAEL AND SARA-LEAH AND THE SISTER DINELA SHAYEVITCH

My dear little boy Shmaiyela was born on the 18th of April, 1948, in Tel Aviv, in a time of the combat battles in Yafu.

Our dear son lived until he was 20 1/2 years. The 19th of September, 1968, he went off on a mission in the neighborhood of Bayit-Shan. That resulted in a tragedy for the whole family.

Our Shmaiyela was a very wonderful child. He was tall and very handsome. Everybody wondered at his attributes. We had tremendous satisfaction from him. He was an excellent student, one of the best. When a new school opened in our neighborhood, our darling child recited and welcomed the teacher with the other children. When there were various kinds of performances and presentations in the school, our Shmaiyela always played the most important role.

When our Shmaiyela went to Class H, he wrote an article for the newspaper for which he received an entrance pass to the theater for the whole year. From the ministry of education he received a thank you letter with great words of praise for our wonderful child. And now we write about all this, now that it's all in the past.

When Shmaiyela was 13 years old, we made a Bar-Mitzvah for him in a hall with an orchestra. There were a lot of people there. Shmaiyela gave a little talk and he sang beautifully. After our son said the Haftorah in the synagogue, one of the men who prayed there frequently, came up to him and said that he has three sons, that each of them had their Bar-Mitzvah's in the synagogue, but, none of them had said the Haftorah as beautifully as our son.

When our child finished elementary school, he entered high school with marks of only 5 and 2 outstanding.

When he entered high school, he would help out other students with his allowance money, if they needed help.

In 1962 our son entered a Tikun T, Yad-Aliyahu [a technical school], in Tel Aviv. He finished high school and he began to read with great interest about military service. All he wanted was to join the army.

Our son spent 2 years in the military. He participated in the 6 day war. He was in Eku when there was a major explosion there. The watch on his hand was

scorched, but, he remained alive. He took part in the Charama action and he survived that as well. He also took part in other combat.

In the summer of 1968 our child, almost every Saturday, and also in the middle of the week sometimes, would come home. The last time he was at home was the 16th of September, 1968, early on a Tuesday morning. Who could have imagined that we'd never see him again?

On Thursday, the 19th of September 1968, in the afternoon, when my husband, Michael, myself, and our daughter Dinela, were at home, suddenly, two officials from the army brought us the terrible news about Shmaiyela.

Our whole world went black, we fainted. I remember that for a long time we were dazed and confused.

May our sorrow and suffering and our longing not last long.

We simply can't live without our dear Shmaiyela.

We live in great suffering and pain. May the situation only change for the better and may there be peace. That is our desire.

**"FASTER THAN AN EAGLE, STRONGER THAN A LION"
IN MEMORY OF THE PARACHUTIST SHMAIYE SHAYEVITCH**

BY TZVI EICHENBRENNER / RAMAT GAN

I met Shmaiye when he was still a child in school. Afterwards, he studied in high school with my younger son. Shmaiye often showed up at our house, the handsome, slim young man with his quiet bearing, always seeming to be thoughtful and sympathetic. He had a very pleasing face with refined features. He left the best impression on everybody. People noticed him.

His pals always praised him and called him "the guy with a good head on his shoulders". He was successful in speaking publicly at the events which took place at school. He distinguished himself. He belonged to the boy scout organization.

After finishing high school, he got drafted into the defense forces, and he became one of the best soldiers. With the outbreak of the Six Day War, he was sent to the Syrian front and he took part in the hardest fighting to liberate Ramat-HaGolen. As soon as the War was over, Shmaiye joined up again, voluntarily, to be a parachutist.

The new military detachment gave him an opportunity to take part in various battles and counter attacks against the Arab villains who came from the other side of the border to murder Israeli women and children. He took part in the famous attack of the Israeli forces on the Jordanian town of Kerame, the most important base of the Arab terrorists and murderers.

After ending his parachutist course, they wanted to put him to work at a desk, but Shmaiye wouldn't hear of it and he demanded that he be able to remain in a combat unit, the one that he'd been operating in. As a result of that, he took part in a lot of the combat against the terrorists on the other side of the border and also on this side of the Jordan river.

About his patriotism I can quote what the father of Shmaiye, Michael Shayevitch, a man who was greatly broken up and felt very orphaned by the death of his son, said: "Once when Shmaiye came home on a leave, as was his habit, he came to bed very worn out. But they often used to wake him up very, very early in the morning. In the middle of the night I heard a tremendous noise in his room. I got out of bed and went into his room. I saw him there half asleep, he grabbed his rifle, just as if he wanted to run out the door with it and go someplace. I understood immediately what was happening and grabbed him with both hands and calmed him down. When he woke up to what was happening he went back to sleep again."

"Each time that he would come home for a day, he would be in a hurry all the time, he wanted to get back to his unit, he never had any time", his mother, Sarah-Leah, described about him, with a restrained calmness.

"Once I asked him why he was always in a hurry to get back, 'You just got here', I would say to him. And his response was a very evasive one, 'I just came to see you for a moment and to say hello'." His trembling mother didn't really understand then, that her son was ready at any moment to give his young life for his people and land. She didn't understand just how prepared Shmaiye was to sacrifice himself on the altar.

On the 16th of September, 1968, Shmaiye parted with all his family members and went back to his unit. The next day, on the radio news at 10 o'clock at night, the announcer of Shidury Yisrael added that there was a military incident with terrorists and 6 soldiers had been killed.

Two days later we read in the newspapers the following: *Yesterday in the military cemetery in Tel Aviv were buried three young fresh victims, three parachutists, who fought shoulder to shoulder, who attacked together and fell together. At the funeral, where thousands of people attended, many high ranking officers of the Israeli defense forces, were among them.*

In one of those graves the unforgettable Shmaiye Shayewitz found his eternal rest, someone about whom we were able to say the proverb: "They were lighter than eagles and bolder than lions".

ARYE AGASSI, zal

[See PHOTO-B46 at the end of Section B]

Born on Kibbutz Gvat on the seventh day of Passover 1947 to his parents Channah and Elimelech Agassi (Rozenberg) of Demblin-Modzjitz. Studied first grade until moving to Kibbutz Yif'at. In Yif'at completed twelve years of studies in the regional school of the Western Valley.

Upon completing his studies, he went to be a leader at the Working Youth Movement's chapter of Kefar Sava. Several months later, he went to lead in the movement's chapter of Kiriath Borochof of Ramat Gan. He fulfilled these roles for a year and led dozens of graduates. Some of them went to settle in Grofit [in the Arava desert] and others are a training group in Yiftah and are intended to complete the membership of Mishmar David.

Two and a half years ago, after completing his year of youth leadership, he was conscripted to the IDF. From the beginning he volunteered in the paratroopers' field reconnaissance unit. A year later, he graduated from a section-leaders course. Thereafter he participated with his unit in several operations (Karame raid, ambushes and hot pursuits) as a sergeant.

On leaves in the kibbutz, he worked in the orchards, as he did since childhood.

During a hot pursuit after a gang of terrorists, at 2 p.m. on June 11, 1969, he entered with his soldiers and commanding officers into a battle, in which he fell. He was twenty two years old.

FROM MA'ARIV DAILY, FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1969:

More details became known yesterday about the pursuit in the Jordan Valley in which three IDF soldiers died and eight terrorists were killed. The pursuit was conducted in a ravine with thick bushes, some 11 kilometers from the river. The contact with the terrorists was established at 2 P.M., in ranges of six to ten meters.

Sergeant Arye Agassi was the first one to see the terrorists. He shouted: "Careful, friends, Fatahim. Take your positions!" At that time the Fatah terrorists spotted our people and a fire fight developed in close range, as both our soldiers and the terrorists threw grenades.

The three victims were the closest ones to the Fatah men. They conducted a short fight. Lieutenant Shahrabani, who was severely injured, continued to fight. According to the investigation, it turned out that he managed to throw two hand grenades at the terrorists that were closest to him. These grenades caused the death of three or four terrorists.

FROM WORDS SAID BY ARYE AGASSI'S COMMANDER OVER THE GRAVE:

You came to us from another unit to assume commanding roles. I knew that you were careful of taking these roles. I talked to you much about it. Here, before all those assembled near you, I can tell you that you fulfilled every mission assigned to you with devotion and success. You showed resourcefulness and bravery in all tests and clashes. I remember your good hearted smile and I can promise you here that we will continue from where you stopped.

We are bidding farewell to you and we shall continue to walk in the ways we walked together.

FAREWELL OVER THE GRAVE OF SERGEANT ARYE AGASSI, זל

My dear Arye Agassi,

You arrived at a glorious unit. Following a short training session, you were appointed section leader. I remember your hesitations upon receiving the appointment. I can tell you now that everything that you did was done the best way possible. You brought your soldiers to exemplary achievements. You understood your soldiers and were resourceful. You stayed cool under fire and taught us all what it means to be in control of yourself and in pursuit of your mission. In all your actions you were high spirited and always had a smile on your face.

In this last pursuit you were at the spearhead unit. As an excellent fielder, you managed to detect the enemy despite the difficult terrain. You warned us, and therefore saved other lives. But you did not save your own life.

Today, on your grave, I say good-bye to you on behalf of the unit's commanders and soldiers, with agony and with pride.

Major Yishai Yizhar, deputy battalion commanding officer



Rabbi Yisrael Taub
(PAGE 211 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B32



The Modzjitzer Rabbi Saul Taub
(PAGE 221 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B33



Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu Taub
(PAGE 228 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B34



ר' אברהם שמלצשטיין ז"ל (דער „פורים-סוחר")

Reb Avram Shmeltzstein (The "Purim-Soycher")

(PAGE 238 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

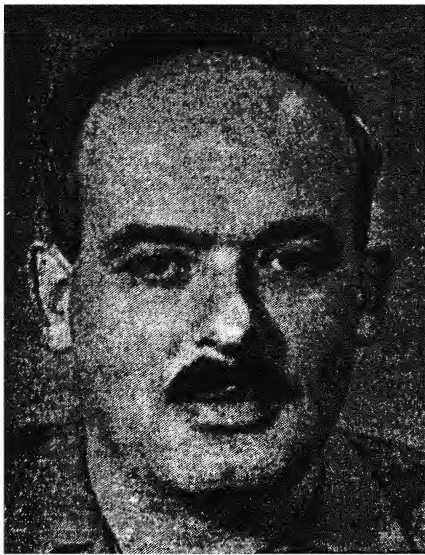
PHOTO-B35



Novelist Binyamin Demblin (Taitelboim) And His Wife

(PAGE 247 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-B36



המשורר, הסופר והמתרגם בנימין טנא
דיכטער, שרייבער און איבערזעצער בנימין טנא

Poet, Author And Translator
Binyamin Tene
(PAGE 250 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B37



Chaim Traler, zal
(PAGE 251 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B38



Moshe Hallel Anglister, zal, and Sons
(PAGE 255 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B39



די משפחה פון ר' שיעלע שטאַמלער

משכחת ר' שיעלע שטמלר

The Family of Reb Shiyele Shtamler
(PAGE 266 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B40



נח עקהייזער ז"ל

Nuach Ekheiser, zal

(PAGE 272 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-B41



Avram Abramowitz *(the second from the left)*
Activist In Trade Unions In Demblin
(PAGE 283 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-B42



Yichzakel Shulman, zal
(PAGE 285 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B43



Pilot Alexander Armon (Kestenboim), zal
(PAGE 287 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B44



Paratrooper, Shmaiye Shayeveitch, zal
(PAGE 294 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B45



Arye Agassi, zal
(PAGE 299 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-B46

C.
THE HOLOCAUST

BINYAMIN TENE

CHILDHOOD

(from the book Songs and Poems)

Childhood was a rectangle of bright light,
A column of golden dust spinning in the air,
And a flower of frost blooming in the windows,
And a long cry of leaking rain.
The clock's ticking at night
And many fears of dark corners.

Childhood was a mother's soft neck,
Shelter from fear and thundering storms,
Childhood was her songs without words,
Played somewhere in her heart without sound.
Mercy to the naked bird that froze,
Which we buried in the winter garden.

And weep on Joseph in the Midianite caravan,
And Zahal [IDF] he will do it again!
And laughter on Bil'am who wanted to curse:
But from his mouth he uttered a blessing!
Childhood was also want and hunger,
Father's prayer on long nights.

Cries on the *Shechina* wandering in the Diaspora
On empty houses humming with poverty,
On disaster and ruins from olden days,
And the rage on the face of a coming day.
His voice went on in dirge and song --
Childhood that knows agony and longing.

Set in childhood as a rising sun,
Was the great hand of the mighty God.
Spoke to him Father face to face
Whenever sons were lacking of health.
Pleaded, flattered -- his brow in clouds
Then slowly shown, for he knew he won.

Childhood was heart in song,
Laughter and tears forever along.
I shall see it now, first day of spring,
Kiss her memory on the side of my path.

So distant, oh mine, where is your light?
Your child of then how poor has become!

Joseph in captivity he will not succeed,
In shame he is now, bloody and streaked.
And Bil'am will curse and swear and damn,
His words are burning Israelite tents.
Not a bird froze there with fallen wings --
For my sisters they are who are slaughtered.

And no more Father who shall face to face
Tear up the verdict against his sons,
And no God is there to listen and forgive --
Where are you now, oh mother's soft neck?
Just this song is left me to tick in the nights,
With fears and the horrors so many and dark.

[See PHOTO-C47 at the end of Section C]

WE ESTABLISH YOU AS A LIVING MONUMENT

BY MOSHE WASSERMAN

My dear little town, Demblin, how can I forget you, even for a moment. You are baked into my heart as into the hearts of all those Jews who survived, who were born and who grew up on your earth, and from her, drew nourishing juices.

Who hasn't heard of Demblin-Modzjitz, the town of Torah wisdom and song? The Modzjitzer dynasty was famous in all of Poland and beyond her borders. The sweet song of the Modzjitzer Hasidim brought joy to thousands of hearts until the dark Hitler night settled over the land of Poland where a thousand year history of Jewish life had been. With fire and sword Hitler's vandals fell upon Poland. The first and the greatest victim was the Jewish community there, which was wiped from the face of the earth. Together with all of the towns and villages, our dear town of Demblin was also destroyed. The Jewish quarter burned, the Jews murdered, our holy virtuous sisters, daughters and wives were murdered, raped and tortured as were our innocent children.

Hitler's murderers dragged sick Jews from their beds to the market place and shot them down. Dark indeed was the bright May day in 1942 when 480 Jews were shot down on the spot and the others with blows and rifle butts and sticks were driven to the trains by savage, brutal screams and barking dogs and locked in the lye covered cars without bread, without a drop of water, without any air. In these horribly overcrowded conditions, the victims were taken away to their last road, to Sobibor, from which none of them came back. The German murderers were death to the last cries of human beings who begged, "Have mercy! Just give us a drop of water! We're dying. Have some mercy, at least for the little children!" Instead of water, the human garbage shot into the windows of the cars as soon as they saw a face appear there.

When at the camps they opened the doors of the cars, they took more dead Jews than living ones out. Nobody even knows where to find their bones.

Today we ask, we the Jewish survivors of Demblin-Modzjitz, where can we find the graves of our fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers and wives and children and grandfathers and grandmothers, those who were gassed and burned and shot? Where can we find a grave, the ash of our dear victims who were murdered and dishonored and tortured by the German brutes?

If only just a little hill of earth would remain, we would come to it and weep and scream out our sorrow and rage, "Why? Why? Why did you take and kill these innocent and blameless souls, kill them and burn them alive? Why did they come to such a death? Why?"

The German mass murderers didn't want to leave any graves behind. They didn't want to leave a trace of their ghastly crimes. They erased every trace in order to deny their bloody deeds. And for that reason, we, those who have remained alive, can not come to the graves of our dear and beloved ones in order to scream out our pain and our woe. They wanted that we, those who remained alive, would just quickly forget the horrible crime. But, no! We will never forget the heaven ripping injustice and the fearful crimes which the brutes perpetrated against our people.

We will not forget for even a moment the blood of the innocent which was spilled, the screams and the weeping of innocent victims.

The horrible picture of those who had been shot in the Demblin market place will accompany us to our last breath.

With great reverence will the future generations to come remember your pain, your bitter struggle, and that you had to carry out against the Nazi criminals for the honor of your people.

You will always be our heritage and pride. Your last words will always be for us a holy vow that we will never forget the frightful crimes, never forget and never forgive!

We establish a living monument, a Yizkor book, which will mirror your full life, your creation, your heroism and your tragic end!

YIZKOR

BY ARYE BUCKSPAN, TEL AVIV

Remember!

Remember the congregation of Demblin-Modzjitz Jews! Poor and rich, religious and secular, Hasidim and mitnagdim, progressive and conservatives, old people, youth, women and children, who upon the destruction of the town by the German wild beasts, were concentrated in the ghetto by the murderers, and there were tortured to death in starvation and disease and transported to be annihilated.

Remember!

Remember the burned, the slaughtered, the tortured in all kinds of strange deaths that were transported to their destruction while their lips uttered *Shma Yisrael* and *Am Yisrael Chai*, having no weapons to protect their children and their souls.

Remember!

Remember the dead in the fields and forests who with their weapons defended the honor of the People and of Man.

Remember!

Remember the town's first victims who were felled by the Nazi murderers who conquered the town and with their deaths signaled the murder of Demblin-Modzjitz's Jewry.

Remember!

Remember the poor Jewish mothers, the brave and heroic, who risked their lives defending their babies so they would not fall to the hands of the Nazis, who were thirsty for the blood of innocent babies and children.

Remember!

Remember the old Jewish families of Demblin-Modzjitz, the very well respected as well as the simple ones.

Yizkor for my sisters Frandle and Rachel who fell with their families and other families in the horrible Holocaust of our people.

For their memories we shall lower our heads and swear!

Remember and never forget our People's murderers!

DO NOT FORGET!

BY DAVID SHULMAN / TEL AVIV

Shaking and trembling we open the scroll on the destruction of Demblin's Jewish community. The congregants walked their last march on the way to destruction and annihilation. The miracle did not occur and the defiled hand was not severed. The souls of the martyrs left their bodies as they were praying *Shma Yisrael*, believing in the coming of the Messiah. All they had they gave to their survivors, who are continuing to live and to remember their will: "Forget thou not what Amalek has done to you!"

We shall never forget our townspeople, the simple ones, wood cutters, water drawers, tradesmen, landlords, merchants and wagon drivers. We shall remember the Modzjitz Hasidim, of Guerr and Redzhin. We shall erect eternal tombstones for the poor mothers and babies who were cruelly taken to their last journey. With their deaths they gave us life and granted us the desired homeland.

May we have the strength to go on this mission and complete it successfully. We shall continue to tell, generation to generation, the story of the horrible annihilation that was the fate of Demblin's Jews. We shall say aloud that they walked to their deaths with their heads up, that they kept their Jewish image to their last moment of life and that they valiantly fought the Nazis as partisans. Men, women, elderly and children were taken indiscriminately on the way to death, which for many was the path to their liberation from pain and suffering. They walked into the Gate of the Righteous.

We shall remember and never forget!

THE DESTRUCTION OF DEMBLIN

BY YAACOV EKHEIZER

(Translated originally from Polish at Yad Vashem)

ABOUT MYSELF AND MY FAMILY

I was born in 1905. My parents had a farm in the area near Demblin, in Garvolin province. They were not peasants. I grew up in idyllic surroundings: among forests, fields and lakes. We spent the winters though, in a neighboring town.

With the outbreak of World War I (1914), the Germans occupied the area. They burned down the buildings and the mill at the farm. We spent several years in the neighboring town of Ryki while that was going on. After the War we were able to move back in and rebuild everything. We lived there until the outbreak of World War II (1939).

I and my older brother went to high school. I graduated in 1926. Also I went to a University in Warsaw. Then I came back. I first taught in a Hebrew school in Demblin. I had taken a course in Hebrew teaching in Warsaw, after college. My whole family had by that time settled in Demblin. I had a post as a religious teacher in a school. I continued to take evening courses in mathematics and history. Finally, I also opened an accounting office.

[See PHOTO-C48 at the end of Section C]

JEWISH LIFE IN DEMBLIN UNTIL 1939

The first Jewish school in Demblin was founded by a Jewish officer from the Austrian army who had been there during the First World War in 1917. His name was Kannerynfogel [canarybird] from Lemburg. He was aided by H. Yoseph. After Poland became independent, they returned (they had passed through there during the course of the War). Kannerynfogel married a woman who was from Demblin. They established the first Jewish school which existed until 1923. It then became a public Polish school. The Jewish school wasn't able to sustain itself. Kannarynfogel didn't want to be a teacher anymore. He opened an office like me. After that Kannarynfogel became the director of the Cooperative Bank in Demblin, which he helped to found with myself and Yoseph. There was another bank in town, the Hantverger Bank [a workman's bank] which was supported by a central organization in Warsaw.

The original name of the community was not Demblin. Once, at the time of the Czars, it was named Ivangorod because of a fortress there which was built by the Czar and named for him or another ruler. The fortress was found a kilometer from the community. The community at that time was called Irena, after the name of the general's wife who received the whole region as a gift from the Czar. The Jews always favored the third name which was Modzjitz. That name was from a famous Hasidic dynasty called Modzjitzer, that was named for a renowned Torah scholar by that name who was also the creator of lots of Hasidic songs. I didn't know until now why the Hasidim got so attached to the name Modzjitz.

During the time between the Wars, this area had an airport and a railway yard. The suburbs of the town were named Staurka and Bobrowniki. About 30 Jewish families lived in the suburbs. In all of Demblin, including the periphery, there were about 8,000 people. In the center of the city, it was about 80% Jewish. The suburbs had mostly Poles.

The town had almost all of the Jewish institutions which prevailed between the Wars in Polish towns. The first Zionist organization was founded in the 1920's with all the different splinter groups. But even earlier than that, in 1918 there was the Bund. The Bund [Socialist group] was established in 1918 and included a majority of Jewish youth in the area. There was a cultural center, a library and a reading hall. Later the youth became quite radical and leftist. The regime started to push them around in 1924 when people started to wave the red flag from telephone poles and buildings and from the cultural center. They shut down the cultural center and library. However, while all this was going on, nobody laid a finger on any Zionist organizations. In 1934, a sports club was founded. As I remember, it was called Yirenka. They played soccer with Polish clubs and with clubs from the military base as a result of the air base. The president from Yirenka was Ahron Vanapol.

There were Philanthropic institutions. The "Bikur Choliyum" was an association to take care of people in need, especially sick people, the head of which was Yezji Vanapol, brother of Ahron Vanapol. Yeshi was a folk doctor, without a bona fide degree, but everyone had great respect for his abilities and thought more highly of him than they would a regular doctor. This social welfare group dispensed prescriptions and remedies to people without charging them. Within the community there were various Hasidic synagogues which were the hub of their communities. The last head of the formal organized Jewish community was Luxemburg. My brother, Yosef, was the secretary of this council.

In the 1930's there was a Polish State high school that was started, but very few Jewish students were studying there [implication is they weren't allowed in]. The Jewish youth was aware of things, they were interested in practical affairs and Jewish problems. The anti-Semitism in Poland was sharpened by the economic circumstances. That created more economic hardships for the Jews. As a result,

many Jewish young people left Demblin and went to look for work in places like Warsaw, Lublin and Radom and other places.

According to my calculations, about 30% of the Jewish population had holdings of some kind or another. They were landlords, they owned businesses of different kinds. About 20% were middle class, they were craftsmen, or owned farms, or sold in the market place. there were about 100 Jews who worked at the train yards and at the station. There were no Jewish factories except for one where they made soda water which was owned by Yosef Gilibter and Rozenman's sawmill. There was a bakery which serviced the Polish military. There were several parts of the Polish army that were stationed there, an infantry unit, an artillery unit and there was the air base. The wives of the officers used to come to town to shop because that was where business was most vital and that's where Jews came to shop also. There were other Jewish families in town who in different ways serviced the military. The most notable of those was Pinchas Schteinbuch. He was also noted for his generosity to the poor.

From the religious community, there was the Rabbi Rabinovitch, his Shames and the hazan.

There were 350 to 400 Jewish children attending schools. There were both Jewish and Polish children in the schools, about half and half. Any kind of anti-Semitic expression didn't happen in the schools.

FIRST DAYS OF THE WAR

When the Germans attacked in September of 1939, I personally was on the farm. We remained there for three weeks. Then we found a way to get back to Demblin where everyone was living in great terror. Practically on the first day of the War, the Germans started to bombard the air base. They kept that up, very furious. Over half the people in the town fled to Ryki. The military bombardments didn't stop, they just kept going on. At one point, the refugees from Demblin decided to return there from Ryki and they were on the road. On that occasion 400 of them were killed by German bombing on the highway.

The Germans came in and set up an administration under the Wermacht and the military commandant. In the beginning of 1940, in the winter, an order came that the Officers of the Jewish community should come to Garvolin. They asked themselves should we go or shouldn't we go, what is going to happen if we go? There, the Germans gave them an order that they should begin to resume their activity but they would be under strict supervision from the Germans. In about a month, people started to get waylaid in the street and out of their houses for work gangs. They had become slave labor. They would come home late at night,

exhausted and worn out. Other people who came back from that work would return with a little bit of bread and told stories of being treated relatively well.

The first outright victims in the town were a man and a woman who had gone to a nearby town to a market to find something to buy and they were shot down by the Germans. They weren't where they were supposed to be.

Until the War, Demblin had been part of Garvoliner district. But, the Germans divided it into the Pulawer district. That's where the tragedy began.

The *Judenrat* [Jewish council] was created. It was headed by Leizor Teichman who was the owner of an electrical supply store. There were eight Jews who belonged to the Judenrat. In order to avoid being waylaid, the Judenrat suggested to the Germans to give them a list beforehand of how many workers they needed to send on a given day/project, and they'd do it for them. The demands or lists of the Germans began to appear, they wanted 20 men here, 50 here, etc. The work at hand, one of the big projects, was to rebuild the air base which they had spent so much time destroying. They needed a lot of people to work on that project. A Jew who actually had a work card had a little bit of security. There was a little office, a two room building, a work office in the town. It was run by Luxemburg who was the president of the pre-War Jewish community.

In the first Winter months of 1940, about 400 Jews were working to repair this sorely damaged air base. They weren't paid very much, just pennies. From what they were paid, they were barely able to sustain one person. But the most important advantage of that work was that at least people were able to get out of town. That situation continued for most of 1940. They got up early in the morning to go to work. They had to pass through a special gate with a German watchman. And in the evening they came back. The Germans never spared blows. They freely pushed people around, physically. I remember once that a German ordered a Jew to take his hat off. As the Jew was raising his hand to comply with that order, he started to beat him up with a stick. Then I remember a second instance where a Jew had taken his hat off before he was commanded to do so and got beaten up for that. I also remember a time when a German threw a little Jewish boy in a barrel of water in the dead of winter at a time of extreme cold. But, while you were actually on the job itself, people weren't physically brutalized.

Of course, don't forget, the Poles were receiving four times as much pay for the exact same work. When I began to do this kind of work for the Germans I had to liquidate my own business. At that point, a Jew would never dare to conduct a business like that which had any importance or dignity. The Germans took my typewriters.

THE GHETTO AND THE SELECTION (ROUND-UP)

In the Winter of 1940, the Jews were pushed into certain streets. Among them were: Warshavsky, a part of Okulna, and Potshtove. And with Jews from surrounding communities, they were pushed into Staruvke. The Poles who already lived in Staruvke were displaced and were able to take over the apartments of the Jews that had been driven out of other areas of the town. Within two weeks all of the Jews had to find some place in the radius selected for them. However, it was possible, on occasion, if you had the resources, to make some kind of exchange between Jews and gentiles so that the Jews were able to at least get a hold of a tiny little apartment with a kitchen in exchange for the place that they had lived in, which often was much more sumptuous and had more rooms. That's the way they squeezed all the Jews into one place. On Okulna street and Staruvke.

The economic situation in the ghetto got worse by the day. The Poles were able to travel in and out and they started their own black market so that if you had the means, you were able to improve your own material situation. But they were selling things for exorbitant prices because they had a captive market. The Judenrat started a ration system. With the German's supervision, they were able to distribute rationed amounts of flour, marmalade, potatoes, margarine, soap, and sugar. At the only Jewish bakery there were long, long lines waiting for bread. More people started to get sick under these conditions.

When the Russian front opened up, between the Germans and the Russians, things started to get worse for Jews in Demblin. The Germans initially had been drunk with their easy early victories and one result of that was that the happier they got the more they liked to torture the Jews they had in their possession. The initial administrative apparatus of the German army was never pleasant, it was more just the German army as opposed to the terror units. But, as the Russian front opened, that drew a lot of the men that were stationed there away. Those who remained were a German civilian operation and the Gestapo. The Judenrat remained in place. There were constant demands coming from the Germans being placed on the Judenrat. This created bad feelings within the Jewish community itself. For example, why does one person get paid 100 zlotys and the next person get paid 20 zlotys. People were always feeling edged out and competitive and discriminated against in the way work assignments were made. All normal Jewish commerce/activities came to a standstill because people were totally restricted in their activities. If they worked, they had to work for the Germans. They weren't allowed to engage in any activity of their own. The only work available was working for the Germans which wasn't very pleasant. And you could imagine that in a population where everybody is subject to these orders, people have different kinds of predilections, health conditions and everything else. So, one of the things that started to happen was that they developed a system where people could buy their way out of working or sending someone else in place of them (and this was

apparently while the Judenrat could mediate). But no one was eager to go and work for the Germans. And sometimes, when the Jewish council couldn't provide the required number of people, the Germans would just resort to grabbing people off the street. So nobody had any security at all.

Until the first major deportation (round-up), there wasn't a formal ghetto, in the sense it was surrounded by barbed wire or guards, it was kind of a de facto Ghetto. It was like you knew that at the end of a certain street was as far as you could go safely. The situation continued to get worse when the administration was taken over by the gendarmerie, the S.S. and the Gestapo.

On one occasion 50 Jewish young people were taken away suddenly, and everybody thought they would never see them again. The Judenrat was very devoted and conscientious and was able to maintain contact with them. They found where they were and with the help of a little bit of money they were able to make sure they did indeed come home. But when they did get home they were totally spent and weakened. Belzshetz was where they had been.

There were various rumors about the coming liquidation and round-up. As a result of that, many people tried to escape among other places, to the forest. That was a difficult proposition, not only because it was a very difficult place to live in those kinds of conditions, but because they had other problems to deal with, among them was the anti-Semitism of Poles. That included to an extent the Polish partisan armies, who had been responsible for tormenting and murdering Jews in the forest.

On May 6, 1942 the first round-up took place. The Jewish quarter was cordoned off. In their blood thirsty way, the Germans kept shouting "Rous, Rous" [out, out]. They drove people out of their homes. Everybody had to assemble in the big plaza in the center of the city.

On that day, I was with a group of 150 Jews who were working at the air base and there was telephone news that reached there about what was going on and everybody was extremely upset. The Germans already knew about it. Our overseer, who was *Folksdeutsche* [ethnic German], tried to calm us down. He said everybody should get in line and march home, that nothing would happen to us.

When I returned to Demblin, it was a terrible scene. First, the members of the Judenrat had already taken out of the assembled body of Jews a few individuals. They were able to say that this person is my wife, this person is my cousin, this person is my brother. In another part of the plaza they had gathered people who were sick or crippled or invalids or children, in one place. Trucks/wagons came along and they loaded them up and took them off to the station with half of the whole Jewish population. All of this happened to the accompaniment of blows, shouts, and beatings with clubs and rifle butts by the bloodthirsty Germans. They

also shot people on the spot. We realized afterwards that the first transport was sent to Sobibor. Of my family, everybody just about survived that deportation and were not sent away because most of the people were working at the air base.

At about 4 in the afternoon, everything was very quiet. Half of the houses were standing empty. There was also a great emptiness in the hearts of the people who remained. The Judenrat sat down and tried to figure out what the possibilities were for putting things in order through the Polish work center. They thought that would be a way to save a few people if they got them involved in the Polish work center. They were always trying to establish some security before the next round-up took place.

In the place of those that had been deported, they began to send in new transports of Jews from Preshburg (in Slovakia) and Vienna. They were sent to replace those deported because they needed slave labor. This last group of people was housed at the barracks at the air base. The ones from Vienna were put up at the air base. The ones from Preshburg had to be taken in by the residents of the ghetto who were already overcrowded in the extreme. That created even more hardship and sorrow and lack of privacy. And people of course were very upset, why did these people get sent to me and not to somebody else? But everything eventually fell into place.

At this time there was a typhus epidemic that broke out in the ghetto and everyday there were more victims of the frightening disease which also effected a few Germans. They forbid the workers in the air base to return into the ghetto at night. The isolation that that imposed was very hard to bear. Near the railway line they emptied out a Pole's house and set up a hospital there for the sick people. As I remember the medical person was somebody named Zaltzvaser who is today a doctor. And also there was a hospital set up in Staruvke. That hospital in Staruvke was run by the Judenrat. At both of those hospitals a Dr. Kava worked, he had family in Demblin before the War. There was also a doctor from Lublin. They had extremely difficult working conditions, they didn't have the required tools or medicines. Both hospitals were overflowing and one shouldn't forget that there were Jews who had been sent to Demblin from Preshburg and Vienna but from many other surrounding communities.

Dr. Kava got typhus himself but he was able to pull himself out of it. Later though, he perished in the second deportation in the camp behind Radom where he was sent.

In October, 1942, during the High Holy days, the second deportation occurred. That day I was working with a group of Jews from Preshburg, in the fortress. A German officer, the leader from the working group, advised us not to go into the ghetto. There were horse stalls which were built during the Czarist time and he

told us to stay there overnight. He allowed us to stay there overnight on planks. He gave us some black coffee.

We waited there until the next day when I quickly went into town and ran around in the Staruvke and there wasn't any living Jew to be found there. There were some dead bodies lying by the synagogue which had been burned down previously in 1939. Everywhere, men, women and children had been shot. I went into his house and there wasn't anybody there. I went back into the fortress, to the work place, with a clenched heart and deeply worried and asked myself what had happened to my family.

IN THE CAMP

The camp in the Fortress was being run by a Viennese Jew named Venkart. By the gate, there was a Jewish watchman who I knew. We went around the camp. I found two others who escaped the round-up, Ignatz Bubis and another Jew who was unfamiliar. I found my sisters and brothers (Esther and her child Getl, Naftali, Tzvi, Moshe, Yosef-Nach).

On the second day, the villains came into the camp and took away 200 victims. Later, we realized that was the toll of people that had been shipped away.

In Ulenzh was a small German airfield where I, my brother Moshe and the Rosenberg boy were sent to work. Returning home in an automobile, we saw hundreds of Jews with children in their arms, loaded down with packs and luggage who were being driven along the road. We came closer and recognized immediately that these were Jews from Ryki who were being led away on their last march. The villains ordered them to go four in a row and sing. Behind there were wagons where they threw the dead people, those who had just simply fallen along the way or those that had been shot. And the sick and the weak were also thrown up on the wagons along with the dead people. I saw from the automobile which was taking them to Demblin to the camp. Suddenly I noticed among all the many people my brother David. We persuaded our chauffeur, a Corporal, to slow down with a little bit of money. By so doing, I tried to alert my brother to get in the car, but my brother was completely disoriented and upset (my brother was a Jew in his 50's) and just continued along to die with everybody else.

We began to function as a work camp for the German air force at the airfield in Demblin. The conditions were bearable. It's true there was a very strenuous routine and hard work, but without the starvation, tortures and humiliations which was the plight of Jews who found themselves in the death camps.

Early in the morning we got up and got some coffee to drink. And after the roll call we went to the work office there on site at the airfield. There they divided us

up into various groups of 50, 20 or 10 people. The camp was surrounded by barbed wire. By the gate there was a Jewish watchman, but there was also just beyond the gate a German who had the responsibility for vigilance, who had real control over the gate.

The women worked in the fields and in the garden of what had been an old time Polish agriculture school. The men had to work on the landing strips, doing airplane repairs, in the buildings and unload coal and other building materials. And there were also craftsmen, people who had skills, who were employed there, like electricians, shoemakers and tailors. They worked in the German stores right on site there. In the evenings everybody was led back to their barracks, one on top of the other. We ate in our own kitchen. We divided up products from the German military garrison right on the spot there. In general, when the camp wasn't run by the S.S., the conditions were more or less tolerable.

We even had our own bath and once a week we were obliged to go there and bathe. In the winter days we even got coal to heat the cold barracks. All of these little amenities were made possible thanks to the good relations and bribery which Venkart was able to lay on the Germans.

We even had a hospital in the camp which was run by the doctor from Ryki, Dr. Kestenbaum and Dr. Rozenblitt [the yellow one]. Under their permission, one could stay for a day or two in bed and not go out and work. In that epic we had medicines too. Some of those were supplied from the Jewish aid society in Krakow.

In August, 1943 when the Russians began to near the front of the Vistula river, rumors started to spread that they were going to deport us. The conditions for the Germans started to get worse. The food supply was not quite so plentiful anymore. The women who worked in the fields used to hide and steal potatoes and brought them into the camp. For a shirt you could obtain a little bit of meat or soap. Some of the Jews had hidden away a little bit of jewelry and money and so they were able to live a little bit better.

At the end of 1943, the S.S. took over the camp and immediately the conditions worsened because their regime was much tougher. They had a death dealing ideology, to starve people to death. In the camp, there was underground activity. Mainly a group of interned Poles. In this activity I played a specific role.

RESISTANCE

In that time, I worked almost exclusively as an electrician with another Jew named Fishfeld. Our job was to repair radio apparatus. On a certain day when the Germans were out eating lunch, Fishfeld was able to set up a receiver so he could

hear the news from London about what was happening at the front. Later when I went back to work to fix something in an area where there was only Poles working, I had a terrible fright. A Polish officer who I knew from before the War, named Kizlobsky, had been told about the War news. The Poles in camp started to produce an illegal flyer. In the morning, everybody found out what was happening at the front, as a result of my information. When this kind of little flyer came into German hands, they went wild with rage. They started to tear everything up to find out how people came upon this information because they were sure there was some kind of secret radio transmitter around.

When the German army began to retreat to the airport of Demblin, they installed an electric alarm system and detection system. At that point they only employed Jewish workers, no Poles. They didn't want to have Poles working for them, they just wanted to have Jews working for them. I was employed at different kinds of tasks. On the walls there was a big map with little pennants stuck in it which showed the situation at different parts of the front. I told a Pole who was an acquaintance of mine about these pennants on the map which indicated that there was movement of the Germans towards the West. He made it known through his underground connections. The Germans found out and went crazy. Under the pretense of looking for money they called a roll call and couldn't find any radio apparatus. But those Jews who had been able to secret a little money and or jewelry realized they had to get rid of it before the roll call otherwise they'd be shot, so people threw their stuff away before the Germans had an opportunity to find it.

On a certain day in the airport, a barracks went up in smoke with a lot of building materials. It's possible it was an accidental fire and it's also possible it was an act of sabotage. The S.S. drove together all of the workers, the Jews and the Poles. We were sure that was the end, they were going to do away with us. From each of the groups they gathered together, they pulled out individuals, sometimes one, sometimes two, and they shot them. In the morning they took out another 9 Jews and shot them behind the city. A collective punishment according to the Germans, for burning down the barracks.

The Pole mentioned earlier confided in me that on the airport grounds, some Polish officers had in Sept. 1939 hidden a trunk full of weapons and ammunition and it could be found near the barracks. I dug up the trunk and later on a second Pole took it from me. I think that these people that were part of the Polish resistance were part of the Army Krayova (A.K.) which was connected with the exiled Polish regime in London. There was a number of our own youth in the camp who didn't want to remain at the mercy of the Germans, 14 young men and a woman, just up and disappeared one day from working in the forest and they never came back into the camp and they showed up again and were able to get some bullets and machine guns from an airplane hanger.

At that time in the forest, one could find Jewish partisans. A partisan from Ryki who wanted to take revenge on a Pole, because the Pole had betrayed his sister to Germans, led a group to the peasant's house and shot him along with his family. The A.K. found out and also that the Jews helped themselves to food and sustenance when they came to a peasants house and when they could they surrounded them and murdered them.

THE LIBERATION

In August 1944, they loaded up about half the people in the camp (400) into wagons. We wondered, "Where are they taking us now?". It was hard to be optimistic. It was especially hard to be optimistic because on the spot they shot 30 children.

We were traveling on open wagons at night. It rained. It seemed that the heavens opened up for two whole days and it just kept raining. But before the camp had been evacuated many had fled from the camp. The watch wasn't quite as strict as it had been before. And now, people started to jump off the wagons and run whenever they got the chance. We arrived in Czenstechov. There we talked and found out the evacuation was thanks to Venkart. He understood that if we'd remained in Demblin the Germans would have murdered all of us and if they didn't do it, then the A.K. would have taken care of the job. After the War, I learned that a day after our evacuation, 20 to 30 young people escaped from the camp. A certain one named Feigenboim hid in the field for two days. The Russians liberated him and he now lives in Ramat Gan. One young man from Kozjenitz and another one from Warsaw, after the liberation, returned to the camp because they'd buried something there but the A.K. got them.

Our arrival at the Czenstechov camp found the real hell. When people got off the wagons, the German police and Jewish overseers beat people up. They took everything that the people had. Sometimes they even took their coats off them, their boots, anything they could take. They stuffed them into filthy barracks that were very crowded and just unbearable. Instead of giving us anything to eat they did meaningless work and blows and constant roll calls. And that's the way it was until January 16, 1945, when the Russians arrived in Czenstechov and we were liberated.

I have a very clear memory of the first moment of the liberation: Around 5 p.m. in the afternoon, the electrical station in Czenstechov was bombarded and the city went dark. One of the assistants of the camp commanders came into the barracks with a revolver and started shouting "Raus! Raus!". Everybody was in a state of terror and left the barracks. In one barrack where there were women, among them my sister, when this person came in with the same routine, one of the

women and my sister jumped him with a knife. He shot his revolver a few times aimlessly and got out fast and never came back.

We saw that the watchman guards were hiding on the roofs and at around 9 p.m. in the evening, a Jewish committee formed in the camp and I belonged to it. We went into the German store rooms after weapons and took whatever we wanted there, and armed, we went to the guard tower, the highest tower in the camp. There wasn't a living soul around. One group remained by the gate. A second ran around throughout the camp shouting "*Mir Zenen Fray!*" [we're free]. In the quarters of the commandant of the camp we found some booze. With torches we torched his quarters and then we danced and sang with joy and then we ate and we drank.

In the morning the Poles came to the camp with wagons, sacks and valises in order to take whatever they could get. The storerooms were full. The Poles didn't bother us in any way. It was very important, freedom.

I, my two sisters, a sister-in-law with a child and a sister's daughter went away behind the city and we arrived in a little village and wanted to go into a peasant's house. But we came upon two members of the A.K. and they ordered us to go to Solteez and there get our papers and legitimize ourselves. We understood though that they really just wanted to kill us. The peasant's wife also understood that and started screaming "Get out of here!". That was our luck, because in that little village, the A.K. did indeed murder Jews. We went off to Radom and from there to Demblin. Our dwelling had been taken over by Poles and the same thing with the farm that we owned in Garbovitz. We went to Lodz.

The 7th of February, 1950, I arrived in Modeynet, Israel.

THE JEWS OF DEMBLIN DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION

BY STAMPHIAN FIDELIS / DEMBLIN, ZAYEJEJE

Introduction by the Editors of the Demblin Book:

The author of this work is Polish from the suburb of Demblin Zayejeje. About three years ago, the book editor approached the city of Demblin, in order to provide her documentary material about the Jews of Demblin. The little town nominated Mr. Fidelis to gather the requested material. And indeed Mr. Fidelis did not disappoint us. He managed to gather many historic documents about the history of the little town and her Jews, but his main achievement was numerous photographs of the Jewish families from Demblin before the holocaust. He sent all of those to us including vary valuable photographs from the civic life in those days.

The committee and editors of this book do not agree with several of the findings and evaluations of Mr. Fidelis in regards to the life of the Jews. They decided not to change any of this testimony and instead leave it for future readers and historians to come up with conclusions and more accurate data.

This chapter about the Jews of Demblin between the years 1918 until 1939 is the writing of this author (Mr. Fidelis) which was also translated to Yiddish and shows in this book on Page 92.

1

It was the month of August in the year 1939. The days were hot, but comfortable. The days were beautiful and the nights were clear without any clouds, the stars and moonlight dominated the darkness of the sky. On such nights the blood flowed warmer in the arteries, the heart pounded stronger and a man's soul felt good. On nights like this, a man's heart yearned for love, warmth and belief. During such nights, the many hearts pounded with innocence and love towards each other. These bursts of emotions and yearnings for love from one person to another were full of warm desire and expectations that the good life was ahead. Many people didn't realize that these were the last fortunate days. Many others hoped to regain these feelings in the good days, but with so much anxiety and sadness when the salvation days arrived they did not have any love in their hearts anymore.

These days of calmness were abruptly interrupted by a new order that was echoed from one edge of the country of Poland to another and the order was "conscription!". Many hearts full of love, that were burning from desire were shaken and the souls were afraid, in shock. "What will tomorrow bring us?", asked the souls. "What will be our fortune!". However, all of these questions remained hanging in the air without a solution or an answer.

The army units that camped at Demblin left their camp and moved West in order to protect the borders of the country. Many of them included Jewish soldiers who joined the military to protect the country against the Nazi animal. Although the entire military moved westward to stop the invader, inside the country there wasn't any substantial defense.

As a result the Nazi Luftwaffe airplanes flew in the sky of Poland without any interruption and took photographs under the skies of Demblin of military targets and later on targeted them without any interruption. There was not one Polish airplane that took off to challenge the murderers' airplanes. There was not one single shot against those airplanes to protect the country and there was not one gun pointed at them to challenge them. During this embarrassing and confusing period, the Polish central command was not able to issue even one order to protect the country. It is no wonder that all the German airplanes could fly freely under our skies.

The days before the War were days of embarrassment and chaos. This was especially felt among the Jews. The commerce froze totally and the Jewish community was captured by fear as a result of the surrounding bad rumors. Although the consumer goods commerce froze, the commerce of food products was on the rise, such as sugar, salt, flour, oils, and so forth. Those that had the money started to store as much as possible, in the storage room's barrels, in the ground and any other place that they could find. The next priority after food storage was the fixing of the houses. However, the very poor people were not able to store or fix their houses, their entire property was carried on their back.

THE GERMAN INVASION

On September 1, 1939, at 6:00 o'clock in the morning, the first German bombs fell down on the airport in Demblin. The first explosion alerted people from their beds. Above the airport could be seen large smoke and dust clouds. The noise of the airplanes spread fear and anxiety among the people. After the airplanes had begun, the very first chaos, disaster and death were revealed, human casualties, soldiers, children and clerks. The explosions also blew up many buildings, windows and roofs. Demblin experienced its first bombing attack. From the 1st until the 7th of September, the German airplane bombers, bombed our city daily.

The targets were the airport, the fortress, the train station, the bridges. Excluding Potzovah Street, there were no bombs dropped on the city streets.

Many Jewish families left the city in the first days of the war and escaped to the forest and adjacent regions. The streets were quiet, the houses stood disgraced, and on the pavement were piled up pieces of broken glass and mortar that fell off the houses' walls. Stores' signs that were torn off from their places now just hung as a testimony to the chaos that inflicted the city.

Only the cats were sneaking among the houses, yelling with sadness and hunger.

On the 8th of the month, the Polish army abandoned the fortress as well as the airport that was totally quiet by now. Only at Stovay was there still soldier guards that waited for the order to explode the storage of weapons and ammunition. And indeed on September 11, they set fire at the storage ammunition and the soldiers retreated eastward.

On the next day, September 12, 1939, the Germans took the city of Demblin and controlled the city until March 29, 1944.

2

When the Germans took over Demblin, the Polish and Jewish population that had escaped earlier from the city, started to return to the city. Everybody was still afraid. During their first days of occupation, the Germans did not treat the population with cruelty. However, they inflicted forced labor on the Jews, such as collecting dead human bodies and dead animals that were piled up on the street. The Jewish population, without any compensation, were forced to clean the airport and the streets of the city from the destruction and the debris.

Although the Germans did not forbid the Jews to open their stores, the shelves in the stores were empty and there was no source for the new merchandise. Any new merchandise that was found disappeared immediately.

The Germans themselves started to purchase different merchandise in order to send them back home to Germany. Money started to lose its real value and merchandise that had been purchased previously at a regular price started to be excessively expensive. The German occupiers extracted from the economy the Polish monetary system, and instead injected their own money. The population did not trust the new system and they refused to trade their merchandise for the new money. Prices increased dramatically. There was unemployment and the Polish population started to conduct an underground economy and smuggling.

The population was demoralized. There was no house that didn't have one of its family members missing. Nobody knew what to expect for their loved ones. On September 26, refugees and conscripted personnel started to return. They had never arrived at their units, because the units were dissolved. Personnel in uniform had not returned yet because they were defending Warsaw and Modlin, where tough battles were conducted. Then Warsaw and Modlin collapsed with heavy casualties for the Polish army. General Kolberg put together what was left over from the retreating units and tried to put together a second line of defense in the forest of Kotzak. The units of General Kolberg, who were armed very minimally, eventually surrendered, although they fought heroically. From the beginning of October 7, General Kolberg's units surrendered entirely to the Germans. The fortress of Demblin was crowded again with Polish soldiers, but this time they were Prisoners of War (POW's). The population was forced to accept them among themselves though they were unable to provide them with real help. The Nazi guards were so sure about themselves that they scattered the population who were standing and looking at the line of POW's. They yelled and beat them, not allowing any individuals to get close to the lines of the POW's, who were marching in the city. Every once and a while, one of the POW's managed to escape from the line and enter one of the houses where the citizens provided him with food and he immediately changed his clothing. The Jews also were hiding soldiers and providing them with civilian clothing.

People got closer to each other and unified under the same crises. The division between Jews and Poles disappeared. All were brothers to the same fortune. All were Poles. However, during many long months of occupation, terror and propaganda, the anti-Semitic poison started to bubble among the wide layers of the population. The smart and conscious among the Poles did not trust and follow the German propaganda. The Jews were their friend as ever.

From October 15, many soldiers started to return, all dressed in a strange uniform. These were the lucky ones who managed to escape from the Nazis, the occupation and the POW's. The population started to help them but the most significant assistance came from the Jewish population. With no limit, they provided material help, such as food and clothing. If someone would get help without being able to pay back he would hear the following condolence "At the end of the War, we will settle the bill". The professional military personnel first arrived to the Jewish houses, the first support that they got was information about their family and what was happening in the city in general. The Jewish families were the first to support and help because they knew very well what it felt like to be in such a crises. Crises was always their company in this part of their lives. There was no time now for mourning and being depressed. It was a time for action and courage.

This was the testimony of Pair Yandzjevsky, officer from the 15th battalion: "I returned to Demblin in mid-November. On the street I met the community

secretary, Blazjesky, and I learned that the Germans were interrogating everyone about the officers from the Polish army who were hiding in Demblin. In order to get more accurate information, I ended up going to Yaacov Rosenberg's house and there I stayed overnight. Then, the next few days I spent at Pinchas Schteinbuch Kamiyan and at Lena Shtorn's. They were not working as merchants anymore and most of the conversations were about the War. 'What will the future day bring and what kind of fate is expected to come upon us?.'" None of the individuals had any answers to these questions.

At this time the Germans hadn't started with the murderous killing but commerce was forbidden. The Jewish population, in order to manage, started to sell, in hiding, industrial products, in order to provide food products for their family members. "The War will not last for too many days", said many. Many who listened to the broadcasts from abroad, claimed the English and the British had not entered the War yet and there was hope the Germans would not win the War. Many tried to console themselves and tried to keep up a higher morale.

3

In mid-1939, the Germans ordered the submission of all radios and cameras. The Volksdeutcher, those Germans with the swastika bands, passed from house to house and conducted searches for the forbidden equipment, but on many occasions they took whatever they felt like taking with them. This was, as a matter of fact, the first forced action by the Germans on the Polish and Jewish populations.

On December, 1939, came the shocking news about the mass murder of 130 Polish people in Vahver, adjacent to Warsaw, for the revenge of the killing of a drunken German in one of the bars. Men were captured in their houses, in the train station and in the street and were assembled in a central site, where the mass murder was executed. These mass murders shocked the entire nation. Nobody was familiar with the horror of the Nazis yet, and they couldn't grasp this tragedy. How come for one German, 100 innocent people must be killed without even a trial? The community was shocked and terrified, while the Germans prepared for the future killing that didn't have any end.

The Jews were still living mostly in their houses. Only their big houses were confiscated by the Germans. The manufacturing and commerce started to die slowly, slowly, and many stores started to be closed everyday. From 1940, the Jews were not able to get licenses to conduct their stores and services for the general population at large, the only stores and services that they could conduct were for Jews only. At that time, the ghetto wasn't established yet and many Jews were able to get out of the city. And so, indeed, many of the Jewish merchants and manufacturers took advantage of this possibility, and they reached

out to the adjacent cities and villages and brought food to their family members for fixing shoes or sewing garments. Although orders to limit and humiliate the Jews were not conducted at the time, the Jews felt the abuse of the German gendarme very well anytime they were meeting with them. The Jews would be beaten by the Germans, and the little food that they would carry on their back would be confiscated and destroyed in front of them. The Jews were very afraid from these encounters and tried to avoid them as much as possible. The Polish population would support and warn the Jews about such encounters with the Germans, and when the Germans would pass by they would signal the Jews that the road was available.

In May, 1940, the German occupation issued an order that all the Jews should identify themselves by carrying on their arms a band with the logo of the *Magen David* [Star of David]. This identification dramatically limited their movement outside their immediate community. But they took chances and removed the identification band and would get on the road to provide for their family members. These were mostly Jews that looked like the rest of the population, and nobody could tell that they were Jews by looking at their face. Also in the same year, the Judenrat was established by the Germans, and the Germans received the books of the population registration of all the Jews, and the registration of all that died. These books were destroyed at the time of the last expulsions. As a result, nobody can tell the number of the Jewish population in those days.

In the beginning of 1940, when the Jews were still able to move about freely, Rabbi Emanuel Rabinovitch left the city with his family to an unknown destination and he was replaced by his vice Rabbi.

4

[See PHOTO-C49 at the end of Section C]

In the first half of November 1940, the Germans concentrated the Jewish population in several streets of the city: Bankova, Okulna, Sanatorska, Wiewahretznah, Neahztalah and Pshachodneyah Streets. The houses of the expelled Jews were given to the Polish who were transferred from other streets. So by concentrating all the Jews in these streets, the Germans established a ghetto in the city. The ghetto wasn't fenced, a fact that was very important for the Jews, so that they could interact with the general population, although that too was in hiding. The Polish population would often enter the ghetto, but later an order was issued that it was forbidden to enter the ghetto and everybody that would be captured would be killed. After the first death penalty was issued, these inhabitants refrained from publicly entering the ghetto, though a few managed to get in, in hiding. The Jews were forbidden to get out from the ghetto unless they had a special permit, or if it was as a group on the way to work. A Jew that was

captured outside the ghetto without a permit was shot to death on the spot without a trial. And so, thousands of Jews were cramped into the area of the ghetto without any substantial means of survival. They did not get food supply, water, medicine and heating, and that was not enough. The Germans kept issuing one limiting order after the other that limited the freedom and weakened the basic physical existence.

It was forbidden for the Jews to be in the streets populated by the Polish. It was forbidden to buy medicine in the pharmacies, it was forbidden to be in the market on the days of sales and purchasing food products from the farmers. But since the ghetto was not fenced at the time and the streets Okulna and Sanatorska were bordered with the general market, many Jews who dared, entered the market and while no Germans were around managed to buy chickens, potatoes and other food products. Also, farmers on the way to the market who had to pass through the streets Okulna or Pshachodneyah would leave some of the food products with the Jews as long as the Germans were not aware of them and the bill would be dealt with at a later time and another place. Before the beginning of the War there were good relationships between the Polish farmers and the Jews. There was no antagonism to the Jews and they even helped the Jews as much as they could.

The Germans constricted Polish policemen who were serving there before the War. The Police would guard the ghetto so that Poles would not enter it and Jews would not conduct commerce in it. Many policemen would warn the Jews whenever they saw the Germans approaching. So thanks to the help of the population, the Jews were not hungry. This of course related mostly to the more affluent inhabitants of the Jews in the ghetto. On Okulna street there was a bakery that provided bread for the ghetto inhabitants only. Although the arrangement was to buy bread with coupons, the bakery provided bread even though many of the people didn't have coupons. Bread with coupons were given only for those who were enlisted as workers or laborers. These portions were very small and it was not enough to provide for the body and sometimes it didn't stop death from hunger.

Every month the Germans issued new orders. They nominated a new Ukrainian Commissioner on the Committee. Demblin was announced as a county that was commissioned by the Ukrainian commissioner and was helped by "gendarme" Police for criminal cases, or the "black police" and also "Arbaiystdnst". The Gendarmes were at the Demblin station and at the "Banschutz". The gendarme unit was composed of the S.S. man Yohan Peterson, Abal, Schultz, and the "Folkdeutcher" Edward Brokof and a Pole from the village Stroytzyah Kerash, Edek the infamous. The criminal police were composed of two individuals, the commandant Garbartzek and another policeman.

In addition there was "the blue police" and also other Gendarmes, but I will not mention these because they were not abusive to the population.

As soon as the oppressive organizations were organized, the Germans started issuing their criminal orders. The Nazi head of the "Arbaytz" ordered the Judenrat to prepare a list of the Jews who were able to work. From this list he chose several people to work at the airports, at the fortress and maintenance of the roads and foundries. These workers received food coupons that were given in a very minimal quantity that obviously was not enough to satisfy their hunger, however the work outside the ghetto provided the Jews with contact with the Polish workers who provided the Jews different food products. Jews that were not in the labor force, stuck inside the ghetto, and did not receive food coupons.

The Jewish stores along Warshavsky street were totally diminished. A few of the stores were given to the "Folksdeutsh", to Portan, Kovalsky and the others. Other stores were totally looted by the Nazis and the merchandise was transported to stores in Germany. The Jews were left only with a few meaningless small stores inside the ghetto. The Jewish banks were essentially savings for community services and were all closed in the midst of 1939. The Judenrat was situated in one of the bank structures on Bankova street. Among its members were Kannaryfogel, Korst, Teichman, Ekheizer, Pinchas Schteinbuch, Shulman, Price, Weinberg and Yaacov Rosenberg. The Judenrat job was to represent the Jews before the German occupation and also to keep security and order in the ghetto. As a matter of fact, the Judenrat was a very important channel to transfer orders against the Jews and execute those orders as well. The Judenrat established a Jewish police that was in charge of the order in the ghetto, the sanitation and also to make sure that nobody would get out of the ghetto as well as keep the Polish from penetrating into the ghetto. In addition, the Jewish police were in charge of concentrating and transferring the Jewish laborers to their jobs. From those concentration points, the Jews were selected for numerous forced labor by Polish workers, Folkdeutcher, the Wermacht soldiers and the "Sondardnietz". The Sondardnietz were also called the Black because of their black hats. These were mostly Folkdeutcher and nationalist Ukrainians, hoodlums and criminals from the worst cases. There was no limit to their torturing of the Jews who fell into their hands. At any occasion they would inflict vicious beating with a leather whip on the Jewish body. Jews who were marched to their work were forced to dance and sing. Some of the humiliating words of the forced singing were "during the days of Marshall Ridge Shmigly we were lazy, but Hitler our leader, is teaching us how to work". The Blacks closely watched the singers and if one of the Jews did not sing, he would immediately and viciously be whipped with a leather whip or hit by a rifle and there were several cases where he would be murdered or be killed on the spot. No one would charge them for killing a Jew. There would be no inquiry why a Jew would be killed, and nobody had to justify themselves. They treated the Jews worse than an animal. There was one case where one of the Gendarmes, who used to kill Jews daily, saw a man whipping his horse very badly. He immediately grabbed the whip from the man and asked him why was he treating a defenseless animal like that so cruelly. That was the basic mercy of the German gendarme.

As a result of the high density and the lack of water supply, heating and electricity, diseases, mostly dysentery, started to spread among the Jewish population. In order to prevent spreading the diseases beyond the ghetto periphery, the Germans let the Judenrat open a hospital at the Zjelinsky house by the railroad in front of the park. This was on June, 1944. The hospital doctor was Kava, and his helper was the folk doctor Vanapol.

The main access to the hospital was through Warshavsky street, but in order to avoid meeting the German Gendarmes and the German clerks, the doctors and the nurses approached through different streets, Neyzvietska and Koshtseylnah then to Warshavsky Street and then to the hospital. The Jews were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks, they could only walk on the street and if they encountered a German on the way they had to take off their hat and hold it in their hands. In order to avoid that, many Jews chose to walk on an alternate, longer way in order to be able to walk on the pavement and not to take their hat off for the Nazis. The Gestapo, the Commissars and the officers and soldiers of the Wermacht didn't care much about the Jews who were passing by them, however they kept the Gendarmes to execute those humiliating rules and orders.

5

After France was conquered, Demblin was flooded with German soldiers. The fortress was occupied by the infantry, and the airport was occupied by the pilots. From morning until evening the sounds of orders, airplane engines and crowds singing of "Heil, Heil" were echoed all over the place. There was a significant increase of military guarding the bridges, the roads and more pressure on the local population. Carriages and pedestrians were monitored and checked at every corner and different food products such as meat, flour, butter, eggs, etc. were confiscated. Many of the food products were not even reaching the city. The Germans confiscated much of it to their own discretion. It was also impossible to bring food products from the little town Ryki and at the Demblin train station the "Gunshutzman", the Gendarmes who guarded the train station, broke into the cars and conducted searches and confiscated many of the products that the passengers carried with them. From then on, Demblin was called by many passengers "*Goloshiem*" which means bolded head, because the Germans took everything away from the passengers, as if they shaved their head. This situation continued until the liberation of Poland. But food products were still available in Demblin. Can you imagine the difficult situation of the Jewish population that was stuck in the ghetto without coming in and out? The rich Jews didn't suffer any hunger, but the poor ones only had their bare hands ready to work at their disposal, looked pale and very thin as a result of lack of adequate food and medication. Even the Judenrat that tried to spread the food products equally among the Jewish population wasn't really helpful and functional. The food distribution became more and more difficult from day to day because the dramatic

increase of new Jewish refugees who were expelled from Podzen county couldn't take with them any property or money besides just bedding. So that the little that was available had to be equally spread among the local poor Jews and the incoming refugees.

Among the refugees that arrived in Demblin was Dr. Kava and his wife who joined the very modest Jewish doctors. The Judenrat provided him with the necessary medical equipment and material and in return Dr. Kava took care of the Jewish and non-Jewish patients of the hospital. Many Poles enjoyed Dr. Kava's treatment, among them were my own family members. He was living on 13 Pshachodneyah street at the Rayefsky's house.

As stated before, the Jews' nutrition situation worsened from day to day. Many Polish families whose conditions were better because they could move from one place to another place freely supported their Jewish friends, but even this was very difficult because the War separated friends. Many were under surveillance and many were in hiding. In spite of all of that there were many Poles who provided help and that was a testimony for the close relationship between Poles and Jews.

Demblin's indigenous population were people who knew each other throughout their childhood years and they never forgot their neighbors while in trouble and handed them their help. But at the same time during a War and oppression occupation there was very cruel, unrelenting anti-Semitic propaganda, and a new human character emerged. This new character had no mercy in conscious to his fellows, just like a wolf. These kind of people were merchants and involved in smuggling. For large sums of money, especially gold and expensive jewelry, they provided food. But these human relationships were not really surprising because whenever the Germans caught someone who was smuggling one kilogram of flour, butter or pig fat, he would execute that person immediately. The Germans also executed every Christian who came in contact with the Jews. Therefore again the price was very high, because life was very expensive. At the same time there were few in the society who tried to avoid the merchants and the smugglers to rip off the Jews. These merchants and smugglers were especially opposed by the underground who were involved in the struggle against spies for the Germans, deserters. These were proud people who declared loudly that they were proud Poles and they had to unite in order to fight against the occupier. Many ended up in prison and were executed. So the Nazi terror was established in Demblin.

In October, 1940, a Polish officer, Prantzeshak Yandzjevsky, was nominated to be in charge of the workers' food store. This workers' food store was located in the yard at Warshavsky street in front of Bankova street. Also at the same place, in the basement of what used to be a bank, was additional storage of sugar and sugar products. There was a need for a new porter to work at the storage house. The chief commissioner, Lomod Vayndjeyvsky coordinated with the Judenrat and

"Arbaytz" to send them the Jewish porter named Yosky (don't know his last name). Upon working at the storage house at Yandzjevsky's, Yosky started to transfer information from friends. Yandzjevsky organized at the storage house specific locations where food for the ghetto was assembled and organized.

He purchased the food product from the local farmers and from Fodjeyvah ranch. These products included mostly potatoes, cabbage, other kinds of vegetables and sometimes even eggs. All these products were sold to the ghetto at the same purchase price from the farmers without any additional cost. Yitzhak Goldberg, the nephew of Schteinbuch, was always present during the purchasing moments. In the event that the amount of product was a little excessive, Yosky would load them in a bag and transfer the extra products on his back into the ghetto so that it seemed he was carrying that bag to the storage house at Bankova street. However, in most cases, small amounts of food products were carried into the ghetto by Yitzhak Goldberg himself. With the permission of the head commissioner of the storage house, Yandzjevsky was transferring to the ghetto, salt, coffee, beans and other products that were not included in the food coupons for the Jews but they were still very necessary.

Yosky the porter took on himself to carry the food products to the ghetto people and then Goldberg was the connection person between the Yandzjevsky and the Judenrat. The Jewish guards that were located at Bankova street helped Goldberg upon exiting and entering the ghetto so that he did not encounter the Germans. This support of Yandzjevsky for the ghetto inhabitants continued until October 14, 1942 when the ghetto was demolished.

6

It was June 22, 1941 when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union. The Luftwaffe airplanes repeatedly took off from the Demblin airport towards the territory of the Soviet Union. From a distance we could hear many explosions and after two days it was quiet. We didn't hear the airplane engines anymore and the guns were silent. But at the same time, day and night, lines of German infantry, tanks and armored personnel passed Eastward through the city. Twice a week the Germans broadcast their victories through a large speaker that was positioned in the central plaza of the market. People listened to the news with sorrow and expressions of pain on their faces. This was not the news they expected, not the German victory, all they wanted to listen to was the German defeat. But it turned out that these wishes were eventually realized.

On approximately July 10, the first Soviet POW's arrived in Demblin where they were imprisoned in the city fortress. Through many days, the Russian POW's flowed into the city and the city fortress was already full. Then they were imprisoned at the former 28th battalion shacks that were located at Bilova street.

The Nazis did not provide them with food and care and they started to die by the thousands. There were reports about cannibalism at the super stalag where POW's ate their dead companions' bodies. The bad sanitary situation and the hunger caused the spread of epidemics of typhus of different kinds. However, the epidemic was not confined to only POW camps, it also spread throughout the entire area. Of course the ghetto condition was very good for the spread of typhus, many died and there was no house that didn't have a sick person in it. When the Typhus epidemic started to penetrate through the Polish population, only then did the Germans take action in order to protect themselves from the spread of the typhus epidemic. The open hospital for the Polish people at the school yard number 1 at Sochatzki street and for the Jews at the Pumienovsky house at Starovka street.

The Polish hospital had very few medications, but on the other hand the Jewish hospital had none, because the Jewish hospital did not receive any medication, neither could they purchase medication by high payments because nobody would dare send medications to the Jews. The little that was in stock depleted quickly and new medication was impossible to get. Since the hospital couldn't be operated without medication, Dr. Kava addressed me and asked me to provide him with some medications for his hospital. I was the sanitation inspector and knew many Jews, Yaacov Rosenberg, Pinchas Schteinbuch, Yitzhak Goldberg, Schweignberg, Kaminsky and his daughter Paula and I also had a license to get into the ghetto for my job. I addressed Dr. Kava's request for medication and I started the process of providing those from the local pharmacies. I contacted the pharmacy in Warsaw at Polvaska street, I informed the owner at the pharmacy the kind of medication that I needed and the purpose. It was possible to get any kind of medication at that pharmacy and if they didn't have it the pharmacist would order and eventually receive it. I myself could not leave Demblin so often, so my wife took part in the purchase of the medication. This medications were mostly Kardiosole, Korameid, Koramein, Strychnine and so on. Upon receiving the medication order from the doctor or from Goldberg, I would take a trip to Warsaw, purchase those and order new ones. However, the production of medication had priority first of all for the German army so as a result it was more and more difficult to get those. Only the pharmacies named "*Nur Fir Deutsche*" were well equipped which of course served the Germans only. At one of those pharmacies, located at Krakovskeyah Pashdmiesche, my wife was able to purchase some medications after she was equipped with a recommendation letter from one of the pharmacists who was working there. In May, 1942 the typhus epidemic was eased significantly and there was no need for medications anymore. As a result, the contacts with the pharmacies stopped.

In the winter of 1941/1942 the Germans ordered the population to provide a quota of winter jackets and gloves. This order was addressed mostly to the Jewish population and the Germans executed these orders very severely. They searched the Jewish houses and confiscated coats, furs and other products. The Jews and

the Poles tried as much as they could to hide the furs from the Germans. It seemed that the order to hand over the winter jackets and the furs to the Germans did not reach everybody. On one of the difficult winter nights, two ranch owners, well dressed with fur coats arrived in Demblin. On the way to the city they encountered two German Gendarmes who ordered them to immediately take off their fur coats and in order for them not to get cold the Germans beat them cruelly so that they would keep warm. The two jumped on their cart and escaped to their houses. From that day on nobody dared appear dressed with a fur coat in Demblin.

The encampment of the Jews in the Ghetto was a very convenient arrangement for the Germans. The Ghetto was easily accessible to every gendarme, Gestapo person or Nazi commissar, for conducting searches or sending its inhabitants to forced labor, especially to work for the Germans and as a reward they would be beaten. The ghetto inhabitants were to the Nazis like a milk cow, to be milked to its end and at the end to be murdered. The higher seniority a Nazi had, the more strict and cruel his demands were for the Jews. As a reward to "ease up" the condition on life for the Jews, the Nazis demanded from the Judenrat, gold, and without much choice the Judenrat made all efforts to provide them with those demands. If the Nazis while robbing a Jew caught a Jew with an expression of discomfort on his face, they would inflict a heavy beating with a whip and their rifle on him. So there were many cases where Jews were murdered while their house was robbed. While the Jews were struggling between life and death the War was still on. There were battles in the prairies of Russia and in the deserts of Africa. The British radio station tried to encourage the Poles to hang on, the War is towards its end and the defeat of Hitler is certain. But at the same time at the plaza and streets of the city, the Germans hung banners with big V signs that declared their big victories of the German army in Russia and Africa and the speakers that were situated at the central plaza by the market did not stop screaming and reporting about the new conquests in the USSR and Africa. This activity lowered the moral of the population and trust in the allied victories.

Demblin became a place of mass murder. An endless cemetery of hopeless people. At the city fortress thousands and thousands of Soviet POW's died of hunger. At the train station and the cars, searches were conducted and if someone was found to possess a little bit of fat, flour, tobacco or an egg, he or she would immediately be arrested and beaten to death. The suspected ones were imprisoned in the Gestapo basement in order to put them in front of a shooting squad later on and kill them. Of course most of the suspected ones were Jews. They were not even imprisoned in the basement, instead they were immediately put in front of a shooting squad and shot to death. There were even cases where those miserable were not even taken to a shooting squad, instead they were murdered on the spot, by the train car. The community cart that carried the dead worked around the clock and its itinerary was the train station

cemetery. Many dead bodies were overloaded on one cart. These were mostly Jews who were murdered for trying to smuggle some bread for the children.

If a Jew was caught outside the ghetto he became a game for the murderers. First, to entertain themselves, they would torture him and when he would lie down unconscious they would finish him off by smashing his skull. In Demblin there were three executioners who were cruel beyond any human imagination. These were the Gendarmes, S.S. Yohan Peterson, gendarme of the Folkdeutcher, Edek Edward Brokof and the policeman, Garbartzek from the criminal police. Peterson was an executioner and his height reached to two meters (about seven feet). He was always accompanied by a special dog trained to attack human beings.

Upon Peterson's order this dog would attack a human being at his neck and bite it to death. Peterson in the street meant death. And every day before he sat down to eat his breakfast, somebody innocent was murdered. Most of his casualties were Jews but if a Pole was encountered the result would be the same. When Peterson entered the community there were immediately a series of messages about the danger that was approaching. If there was nobody around as a result of the warning, the murdered would ambush his sacrifices behind a wall or sit by a window at the cafe "*Nur Pir Deutche*" and wait for his sacrifice. If he saw a Jew in the distance, he would start shooting at him and if he missed he sent his dog to attack and bite him. He would then approach the Jew and shoot him behind on the back of his skull or leave the dog to tear him apart and kill him.

The others followed him. Although they did not shoot as much, they were still very dangerous and killed many. Edek and Garbartzek competed among themselves who would kill the most and the underground declared death on those. Although ambushed, these murderers were never killed and instead they were even more vicious in their treatment and cruelty and they continued to kill more and more people.

7

In the second half of March 1942, the Germans brought Jews who were evicted from Czechia. Most of them were part of the intelligentsia, doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, etc. In Czechia they were told there was a lack of intelligent manpower in the occupied area, and as a result, they were needed. They were allowed to take their clothing, bedding and other items. They were told to put their items and luggage in packages at the freight cars of the train and they were left out only with certificates and receipts that identified their packages. They arrived in Demblin in passenger train cars which were heavily guarded.

Upon arriving at the Demblin train station they were informed that was the end of the trip. When they approached the guard to claim their luggage and packages,

they were told that the freight train car was disconnected by mistake from the train and upon request each one of them would be able to get his packages and that at the moment they all were to stay in special dormitories that were prepared for them with what belongings they had with them. They were handled by the Judenrat and all that they had left in their hands was a piece of paper documenting their last piece of property which they never saw again. They were placed in an already crowded ghetto that had to absorb hundreds of additional people without clothing and bedding. The Judenrat had a very heavy load, taking care of hundreds of additional victims.

A bunch of doctors got together and created a medical group in one of the abandoned apartments in order to raise money for their food. But who could really heal in those days and with what. Of course there were doctors, but medication was lacking. The doctors didn't have enough medication to deal with the epidemic that inflicted the Jewish population under the Nazi occupation.

The Czech Jews took off their expensive clothing and purchased for their value food. Now they looked like the rest of their own kind, the inhabitants of Demblin, and like them they were hungry for food like the fate of the rest of the Demblin population. The Jews from Czechia were not as stoic as their brothers from Poland. They could not withstand the minimal and bad living conditions that waited for them. Soon diseases spread among them and the poor hospital at Pshachodneyah Street was full of Jews from Czechia. They were sleeping two in a bed and still the hospital could not absorb all those in need. The death rate among the newcomers was disproportional compared to the death rate of the senior ghetto inhabitants. When a Jew from Czechia became sick he never came out of his bed, and he died. Although the sanitary workers and doctors were dedicated and worked hard, they could not save many of the lives. Their hard work and dedication was not enough to save people from death. They had a belief that the nightmare would not last for long, a miracle would come and the people would be set free again. This belief helped them carry the horrible days in a more positive way and hope for life, but the days become darker and darker.

Spring came, the sun shown happily but the misery was intensified. On April 19, 1943 the rumor spread from person to person that the Warsaw ghetto started an armed uprising against their occupiers. The resistors claimed that if they were going to die, they might as well die as heroes, with honor. Everyday came the news about the cruel treatment of the Germans, burning people alive in their houses, destroying houses and their inhabitants. Nobody could escape from the claws of the Nazi animal. This horrible news broke the spirit of even the most courageous people. The Jews of Demblin knew by then that their fate would be the same as the Warsaw Jews. Here in Demblin the situation wasn't so cruel yet because there wasn't such a mass murder. The Jews who had been oppressed by the Nazis tried to save their soul and the little property that they still had. But their main worries were about their children. "We may not stay alive, but our

children must survive", the Jewish fathers and mothers used to say. They started to give their children and property away to the Polish neighbors. At that time the Germans started to expel many Poles to work in Germany. While the Poles were not enthusiastic about this move, for the Jews the work in Germany was a chance to survive. As a result the Jews put a lot of effort to be included in the list of workers to be transported.

The main job of sending people to work in Germany was done by the *Arbaiystanst* that was headed by the German Kovalsky. Kovalsky knew Polish very well although he never admitted it. The rumors were that Kovalsky was an officer in the Polish army from the battalions at Pozan county. Kovalsky turned out to be a person that still kept his human image and treated the workers humanely. It is difficult today to state if he ignored many of the young Jewish working candidates who applied for jobs.

The clerks of the *Arbaiystanst*, who were previously army officers, cooperated now with the underground. As a result the public knew what was happening and people were hiding before the big arrest took place. These underground members got instructions to send as many Jewish youths as possible to Germany in order to save them from extinction. Similarly they did the same by sending the local Jews to a variety of jobs in the immediate vicinity of Demblin such as the airport and other institutions in the city. However, sooner or later, the activities of the clerks of the *Arbaiystanst* was discovered and they were forced to run away to the forest and join the partisans. They were all caught by the Nazis and killed except one who survived the occupation.

8

June 7 was the first day of the expulsion of the Jews from Demblin, Ryki and Bobrownik. During the morning hours, all the Jewish inhabitants were gathered from the houses into the central market plaza. They were not allowed to take anything except for a little package in their hands. The expelled were organized in two groups. The young and healthy in one, and the old and children in another. People were organized in lines. Behind them moved farmers' carts that carried the old, the children and additional carts that carried the bodies of dead people. The treatment of the Bobrownik Jews was relatively more humane because they were guarded by the soldiers of the *Wermacht*. Not so were the conditions of the Jews from Ryki. Those that were expelled were treated by the "Blacks". Many were murdered while on the road and everything that happened afterwards cannot be described by a sane human being. The old and the children who were not able to catch up with the march were killed on the spot, and those who were still dying were piled up on the farmers' carts with the rest of the dead bodies. Not all died instantly. They were lying under the dead bodies and died slowly, slowly, with agony. This is the testimony of one of the local eyewitnesses, who watched the

expulsion of the Jews from Ryki. "The most horrible was to see the Jews of Ryki at the time of their expulsion. Surrounded by Blacks and Ukrainians they moved under the burning sun, sweating and with open mouths, hardly breathing. They were repeatedly whipped and beaten by rifle butts of the murderers and those who could not catch up were shot on the spot without hesitation. At that point three farmers immediately collected the dead into their carts.

There were more than 10 carts and they piled up very quickly with old people, children and women. This was a horrible experience that until today, after so many years, when I remember it in front of my eyes, a cold chill passes through my entire body.

At 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon the Germans conducted selections among the Jews of Demblin. Those that were going to be expelled were surrounded by Blacks and Ukrainian soldiers that made them run through Warshavsky street towards the train station. But lets go back to the beginning of the expulsion of our city's Jews. In the morning, as was the daily routine, the healthy Jews showed up for work at the German companies and other jobs that they had. However, by 10:00 a.m. in the morning the entire ghetto was surrounded from all over so that nobody could escape. Other units penetrated the ghetto and started to expel or to concentrate the inhabitants to the central market plaza. At the plaza, the manager of the "*Arbaytz*", members of German companies and Gendarmes were present. The expulsion of the ghetto was done by Blacks and Ukrainians. On the other side of the market plaza stood a Gestapo officer and the Commissar Laanek. A German officer reported to them that the Jews of Demblin had been all concentrated in the central market plaza except the sick ones who were still in their beds in the hospital. When he heard this report, the officer started to walk to the hospital at Pshachodneyah street accompanied with one of the Blacks. He got into the hospital and on the spot killed seven sick patients in their beds. After this murderous action he returned to the market plaza, called the members of the Judenrat, started to send the Jews who were able to work, along Okulna street. The rest, about 2,000 people, joined the Jews who were brought from Ryki and Bobrownik to concentrate there. They were marched towards Warshavsky street. The local farmers gathered the dead bodies of the Jews from Ryki by the fire station and while crossing themselves escaped from the place fearing the Satan of the 20th century dressed in shiny meticulous uniform and on the buckle was written "*Got Mit Ountz*". What an insult! The name of God is written on their buckles, and in their bodies is the blood thirsty Satan.

After the expelled people left the place, the rest of the Jews were allowed to return to their houses. The healthy Jews from Ryki and Bobrownik were also housed in the shacks at the field and were surrounded by barbed wire. The young women from Bobrownik and Ryki were housed in a camp by the road to the airport in order to work there.

In the late evening hours, the Jews returned from their work. They knew about the expulsion that took place while they were away from home. In their hearts snuck in the hope and illusion that the expulsions skipped their own family members. However, when they entered their houses they saw them empty and messy. Then they immediately understood that the murderers got them all. They all immediately burst into crying, and yelled from their hearts like tortured people. The cry sounded from many Jewish houses and the entire ghetto was in mourning.

The expelled were crammed by the Germans into freight train cars until they could not move any parts of the body anymore. The children were thrown on top of the adults that were standing in the car. Prior to loading, the train cars were spread with lye powder. The lye powder stuck to the hot and sweaty bodies of the miserable, burned their skin and eyes and inflicted pain on them. The heat from the many bodies cramped into the car was unbearable, the car was almost hermetically closed and there was not enough air to breath. The miserable fainted and died while standing and nobody could get close to them and help them. There was not one hand to approach them to help them with mercy by giving them a drop of water. All the cars were closed and sealed with a lock. And all around stood the German animals that guarded them from all around. Anyone who tried to get close to the cars was shot to death on the spot.

Whoever stood there and saw these horrific scenes will never in the world be able to understand this terrifying tragedy that took place during that day. Not even an imaginative person will be able to write or report the scene of the stretched hand, the quest and prayer for mercy and the eyes that were poking from their holes from horror and fear and the desperate cries of those who realized that they were on the way to their last hours. The Polish population was forbidden to hang around and witness the scene, however, they were passively witnessing the scene by looking through the windows, seeing their neighbors marching to their death. They could only feel sorry for those who were going to their death but not really help them. Every little expression of help could end up in immediate death. Many people were very fearful and did not trust each other. You didn't know who was your friend and who was your enemy who would tell on you. Those who were weak and had no personality followed their instinct of self defense and participated with the Nazis. Although there were not many who participated with the Nazis in Demblin, there were participators. Because of those traitors, many from the Polish people were encamped in prisons and found their deaths. In spite of everything and in spite of the traitors, many did not give up, there were still human hearts who were helping the desperate. During the first expulsion, the worker Yoskay was locked in the storage house and his friend did not let him get out, in spite of his request to go to the central market plaza. His wife and daughter were taken by the murderers and he remained with his agony and sorrow. Every day when he appeared at work, he would cry about his wife and daughter. If he only mentioned his wife and daughter's name, he could not speak

anymore. Although he was not weak, one night he broke down. He did not talk anymore and he did not touch anything around him. He was not afraid of death anymore. On the contrary, for people in his condition death was salvation from sorrow and desperation. The sorrow and agony was common to all the people of Israel. Most likely in that day, every Jewish house lost at least one of its loved ones. But it was not the time to cry and mourn for loved ones. It was the hour to struggle against the Nazi animal and wear off the German hell. Those who survived the expulsion were determined to struggle and save many others from a similar fate. They started by hiding and smuggling children into the adjacent villages where many found a shelter among the partisans in the forest.

9

Two days after the deportation I met with Pinchas Schteinbuch who told me that one of the Jewish elders wanted to meet me. Schteinbuch gave me the address of the man who was living at the corner of Okulna street and Warshavsky street. When I entered the house I saw the man standing and praying, covered with tallit and tfillin. He pointed out for me to sit on a chair and continued his praying. When he finished his praying, a deep sigh burst from his chest. He then kissed the siddur, untied the tfillin band from his arm, took off the headpiece of the tfillin and mumbled the prayers of *el male rachmim* [God full of mercy]. Then he reached out his hand to bless me, sat down at the table by me and his deep and wise eyes looked at me for awhile, then he addressed me and said, "Sir, I have recommendations about you, therefore I'll talk to you shortly and to the point. As you know, Sir, our family members were deported a few days ago to an unknown destination. Would you, Sir, agree to travel and follow them and find out where they have been transported. Of course we will cover the entire travel cost. Sir, please think about this offer for two days, and then give me your answer. And if you agree, we will provide you with the funds and the blessing of our God will accompany you." As we continued to talk for a little while, I felt as if any additional words increased his agony and soon after I departed and left.

Two days later I returned to the Jew that was the assistant Rabbi and I informed him that I accepted the offer to travel and to find out the destination of the Demblin Jews' deportation. He then thanked me on my good will and then added, that the travel was unnecessary because a few of the train station workers informed him that the destination was the Sobibor camp and he added that if he needed my services again he would certainly remember my willingness to help and would contact me again.

For the average man who didn't have any information about the tragedy and the horror that took place in the ghetto, it looked as though life went on as usual. Day by day people showed up at the concentration point, Germans came and selected

among them the workers that they desired and the rest went back to their houses. There wasn't really life in the ghetto anymore, only the struggle to survive.

In one of the summer days in July, the German commissar, who seemed to be in a bad mood, called the entire Judenrat to show up in front of him.

Everybody showed up at once and lined up in one line, standing in the sun, facing the building wall. They stood bareheaded, the sun hitting their head and sweat rolling down on their foreheads. No one even dared try hiding against the blazing sun. Everyone was shivering with fear and on his lips hung the question "Why did this happen to us?" Rosenberg noticed that the clerk, Yakovshek was sitting at the community room. He thought about asking him why were they standing like this in the sun and if it would be possible to stand away from the blazing sun. He then got out of the line and went into the office. As Rosenberg entered the building, Laanek the commissar burst out accompanied by several Blacks and started to curse the Jews who stood in front of him and immediately ordered the Blacks to conduct "physical exercise" on his victims. Those hoodlums and murderers immediately understood Laanek's idea and with a wild desire started to torture their victims. They yelled and screamed their orders non stop "Get up, fall down, jump, lie down", and so they did for one long hour. The miserable were rolling in the dust oozing sweat from all over their bodies, their breath short, their feet trembled and many collapsed on the ground. Then finally it seemed that the torturers got tired of torturing their victims and ordered the miserable to return to their houses. They didn't wait even a second and catching their last breath they started to run away from those Satan murderers, who shot after them in order to scare them away. With fear and anxiety the Jews arrived at the ghetto and disappeared into their houses. However, Rosenberg couldn't get out of the building because he was hiding behind the closet with the clerk Yakovshak and they both feared for their lives if they were discovered in the building because Jews were not allowed to be in it.

The principle laborer at the airport was the Austrian engineer, Schnieder. The Judenrat people asked him to be included in his labor force and as a reward they gave him gold and jewelry. That engineer was decent. He accepted them into his labor force and as an exchange for the gold and jewelry he received he protected them by informing his supervisors that these Jews were necessary for the work at the airport and that many among them were professionals. His supervisor approved it because the work was very necessary and the War was still continuing.

Many looked for ways to save themselves. There were many who directly asked the Germans to protect them for gold and jewelry. Many others found other ways cheaper and safer. There were a few that asked Prantzeshak Yandzjevsky to help them by sending them to Germany threw the "Arbaiystanst". And indeed, thanks to the effort of Yandzjevsky the "Arbaiystanst" sent Arye Schteibach, Shlomo

Stern, Sviegenberg's daughter, to Germany. However those did not travel as Jews, they traveled as Poles. As a result they were provided with documents that testified to their Polish origin and their roman catholic religion. Those documents were also provided by Yandzjevsky.

After the deportation there were many orphaned left to hang around without a house, father or mother. A few had been helped, but the majority could not find any shelter and continued to hang around from place to place, hungry and beaten like an oppressed animal and they were captured by the Gestapo.

Upon being captured, the Gestapo interrogated them as to who hid them, who provided them with food, and so on. After the interrogation, if they did not reveal anything, they were shot immediately.

In July 1942 there emerged from the police station, two young children, handcuffed, and behind them was Peterson accompanied with his dog. The boy was about 12 years old and the girl was about 9 years old. As they were marching, his dog attacked them. And when they arrived at the central market plaza, Peterson shot them to death at the back of their head.

When the Germans started to lose the battle at Stalingrad and the east front in Africa and when the war with the partisans started to spread and increase in the occupied territory, the Germans increased their terror action against the population in their occupied area. And so, at Demblin, the bloodshed and death increased dramatically. At that time, the murdered never made it to the cemetery. Instead, they were buried at the outskirts of the city in any available space, without any demarcation indicating their region or identity of the murdered.

Among the Jews from Czeckia who arrived in Demblin, there were two beautiful women, the older one said she was the mother of the younger one. They were both very attractive and elegant looking. The rumor was that they might be from Yugoslavia. They walked freely in the streets and did not live in the ghetto. They used to be permanent visitors of the Gestapo officer that used to live at the house of Dr. Kodriatzev on Warshavsky street. The visits seemed to be for matters of different errands and also maybe for purposes of sex, between the Gestapo officer and the younger one. But on one of the days in September, 1942, they all found themselves at the gendarme station together with Paula Kaminsky, two other unidentified women, and six Jewish men. All the 11 people in the group were loaded onto a truck and were led accompanied by the gendarme Edward Brokof Kirsch and another one, to the cemetery. At the cemetery they got off the truck and were led along the left side of the road where they all were shot and buried.

On October 15, 1942, the Germans started to dismantle the ghetto. From the very early hours of the morning, the ghetto was surrounded by units of Ukrainian

"Death Skulls" and S.S. soldiers. The ghetto turned to hell. People went out of their minds while the Nazi murderers started to burst into their houses and with kicks and curses they expelled the Jews. The sick ones were killed immediately on the spot. The Jews who realized that the angel of death had come to take them away, started to hide. Many went crazy and ran away directly into the street where they found their immediate death. Those that did not hurry up to fulfill their orders, children, old and women, were shot on the spot. The rest showed up at the central market plaza. Upon watching these scenarios, many from the Polish population started to cry and many of the religious among them crossed themselves and prayed to God for many of the murderers to be buried alive. At the same time, by the community building at the market plaza, one of the black Satans stood up peacefully with no expression on his murderous face, he did not even blink while looking at the horrible murders that he caused.

Okulna street, Sanatorska and the market plaza were full of the dead bodies of innocent victims. This was the end of the Jewish community of Demblin.

Upon concentrating all the city Jews in one place, their classification started. Women were torn away from their husbands, children from their mothers and with beatings and screams they were sorted out into groups. At the side stood the laborer merchants expecting to get the slaves for no exchange. Those were the lucky ones that went out to work at the airport, the labor camp or the train station with a small package in their hands. They were not allowed to take the time to separate from their family members. The rest were marched along in long lines, with beatings and whipping through Warshavsky street. Cries, screaming and sighs of sorrow were carried among the marchers to their deaths and a prayer was echoed in the air, "May the God of Israel protect his people on its way to slaughter". However, the prayers did not penetrate the copper sky. God gave free hand to Satan to finish up his selected people, the people of Israel. People that in a little while would become dust were marching slowly, slowly toward their last destination. Their watery eyes looked at the houses' windows as if asking for help. But nobody was standing at the windows, nobody could save the miserable, nobody could bare their quest for mercy. The Polish population was also under terror. They were terrified by the screaming and the shooting that accompanied the Demblin Jews in exiting their city where their fathers had lived. The slow ones were shot on the spot. By the river, an old Jewish Czech and his daughter who was holding his hand were far behind the column, therefore one of the Blacks shot him. As he fell on the pavement, his daughter grabbed the rifle from the murderer and screamed, assaulting the murderer of her father. But suddenly she stopped, realizing what she was about to do, but at the same time another murderer aimed his rifle at her head and shot her to death.

For many years, the Demblin population could not forget the horrible and the terrifying scenes still visible to many until these days. The second deportation dismantled the ghetto entirely. That was the end of the last of the Demblin Jews.

The Germans imprisoned the Jews in three camps, at the airport, by the agricultural school that was located on the road between the airport and the fortress and the third was the cargo camp. The rest, about 15,000 people, were sent by the Nazis to Maidanek death camp to the gas chambers. The treatment during this expulsion was far more cruel than the previous one.

After the expulsion, the Nazis ordered the Judenrat to collect all the dead bodies by the synagogue. The next day the farmers came with their carts and collected the dead bodies and buried them at the Bobrownik cemetery. The murdered bodies were loaded on the carts by the Judenrat people and the Jewish police that were left in the ghetto to clean up the dead bodies that the Nazis left after them.

They were also present during the mass burial. I was there also, on behalf of the underground movement in order to see what the Germans did to the Jews. In order to avoid the Germans' suspicion I requested from Hancharski to provide me with documents that my presence at the cemetery was needed for supervising a proper burial to avoid diseases. And indeed I got such a document and throughout the entire burial wrote down whatever I saw. The Bobrownik farmers dug a large mass burial deep enough where all the dead were buried. The farmers were helped by four policemen, and the Germans from the "Death Skulls" and the Banshutze supervised the entire project. The Germans ordered the dead bodies to be stripped of their clothing, but after the farmers requested not to do so, the Germans allowed them. And so, the murdered were buried with their clothing at the moment of their death. Not all were buried on the same day, since the night came down. The Jews, the farmers and I, stayed to sleep that night at Bobrownik in order to finish the job the next day. During the burial, one of the Jews asked me to get a special permit from the murderers to allow him to bury his little son that he found among the dead ones, in a separate grave. The Germans accepted his request and the little boy was buried separately.

The Germans murdered 215 people in that deportation that was the dismantling of the ghetto. However, today I cannot exactly verify the number of the women and the men, because the list that I put together during the burial was all lost with other documents of the Krayova army. Two children, Izio and Ida Rozenman, managed to escape from the deportation. Yan Taryee, a fireman, found them and hid them at his house. Later he created contact with their parents who were imprisoned at the camp by the airport, and brought them back to their parents with the help of the folksdeutcher and Yandzjevsky.

After the deportation the Germans started to loot the houses of the Jews that were murdered. They passed from house to house and looted every valuable item. To witness this action they brought Peter Plnka, Chaslav Stefanski, the community

treasurer and me from the health department. We were all supervised by Gendarmes and the Black Rubientznik and Schteinbuch from the Judenrat. One group put seals on the closed houses at Starovka street. We put seals on the sealed houses along Bankova street. And another group at the sealed houses on Okulna street. At the first house on Bankova street at the side of Warshavsky, an older couple sat at a table and prayed. When the Black saw them he was furious. He yelled and screamed at them, beat them with his rifle butt and immediately kicked first the old woman away from the house and about 20 meters away he killed her on the spot. Then he murdered her husband who collapsed beside her. We could not witness the murder of innocent and defenseless elderly and we were hiding at the adjacent house. We passed around other houses, they were all empty, but in one of the basements at Okulna street the Gendarmes suddenly heard something.

The gendarme ordered me to walk towards the direction of the sound and see what was the source. When I looked into the basement I saw a Jew hiding behind the house. The Jew saw me as well. I hinted to him not to be afraid and I pretended as if I was scaring away a stray cat and I returned to this gendarme. I told him the cat was the source of the noise. I talked loudly so that the hiding Jew would hear me and see that indeed I didn't reveal his hiding. Later, on the way back, I told Schteinbuch about the Jew I discovered, in order to find a way of helping him to arrive at the camp at the airport. And indeed, the next time I met Schteinbuch I discovered that that Jew managed to arrive at the camp.

After November 1, 1942, the Germans emptied all the Jewish houses. They took apart the Jewish houses that were made out of wood and used the material for heating during the cold winter days. The rest of the houses that remained in good shape were confiscated for their living spaces and the rest they gave free for the Poles to live in.

As mentioned before, the Germans established four labor camps in Demblin. Two were situated by the airport, another one by the town and Mozovietchka and the fourth one by the cargo station. The Jews who were imprisoned in the camps by the airport worked under the supervision of the German engineer Schneider in the maintenance of the airport and its shops. The prisoners of the camp that was situated by the city and the other camp by the station were working in the loading and unloading of the train and the cargo cars. The camps were fenced with barbed wire and were guarded by Ukrainians. The camp by the cargo station was not isolated but it was also guarded by Ukrainians. In that camp, my good friends, Dr. Kava and his wife and also Yitzhak Goldberg and his wife, were imprisoned. This camp housed about 120 people and the other camp by the city was bigger and housed about 200 people. I entered and visited the camp by the train quite often and the camp by the city only one time because I did not have any friends and there was no reason for my visit. Even though I would tell the entire truth, nobody would believe me simply because it was forbidden for Poles to be in the

camp area. The wooden living quarters in the camps had beds made out of wood and a little bit of straw was spread that seemed more like garbage. Only Dr. Kava had special conditions. He lived in separate quarters. At the camp by the train station, the Jews had a kitchen for themselves where they prepared "coffee" and "soup" and since this camp was not fenced the prisoners could easily provide themselves with some food products although at very high prices. Not so was the condition at the camp behind the city where Jews from Ryki and Bobrownik and other places were imprisoned. The local Polish population did not recognize them and they did not recognize the local inhabitants. They quickly exhausted the little savings they had with them and soon started to starve to death. When I visited that camp in the summer of 1943 many of them were already dying and not capable of working anymore. At the beginning of July 1943 the Germans dismantled the camp by Irena.

The camp by the station continued to operate, but inhabitants knew very well that the Germans would not let them survive this camp. They were aware of the existence of the death camps, Maidanek, Sobibor, Treblinka and Auschwitz. They believed that only a miracle could save them. I repeatedly tried to persuade Dr. Kava and Goldberg to runaway to the forest and join the partisans, but they did not want to leave their wives who always tried to stay away from the forest because it was unknown.

In March, 1943, Goldberg informed me that Dr. Kava and his wife got typhus and died. Their very poor health condition did not allow them to recover from the disease.

In the Autumn of 1943, the Germans dismantled the camp by the train station. I could not find out the destination of the deportation because at that time the Nazis dismantled the small camps as well, such as Pulawy, Konskavola and Poniatov.

I could not penetrate the camp by the airport because the Germans never granted me a special entry permit and claimed the camp was isolated and had its own sanitary system. Therefore I don't know how many and who were the people imprisoned in it. According to an unreliable estimation I would say that camp had about 500 people, but in order to verify the number only the people who managed to survive from this camp could testify.

Several weeks later Jews started to emerge from their hiding places, hungry, sick and thin like skeletons that were hardly recognizable as human creatures. With the help of a few Poles, the Nazis captured them very easily. The captured were immediately imprisoned and after interrogation they were shot to death at the community yard or at an abandoned house at Sanatorska street. Edek took on the interrogation and the murder himself since he was in the folksdeutcher and knew Polish very well. That murderer killed with his own hands about 300 Jews and about 50 Poles. Micheslav Sabrin also killed many Jews and Poles. The Polish

underground declared the death sentence on him. By the final decision of Krayova army, Sabrin was executed in March, 1944. Tadeush Tarchinsky was executed by the decision of the Krayova army in March, 1942 because throughout many years he worked with Schteinbuch and gave the Germans many names of rich Jews to be executed. In 1943, just this was done to the head of the Police, Garbartznek. Death found him at his lover's apartment at Staromieska street. The hand of vengeance finally captured the master killer Peterson. The Polish underground ambushed him at the village, Krasnoglina, when he returned from Mozchianki. However, the murderers Edward Brokof, Edek and Kirsch stayed alive and well in the land of Poland.

The camp at the airport existed until the beginning of 1944. As the Red Army approached, the Germans transferred the Jews to the Czenstechov region where the Russian winter offensive brought out their final freedom and liberation.

EPILOGUE

The description of the life of the Jews before the First World War, I based on sources from "Mobion and Viki" and also testimonies of the headmaster from the previous school No. 2, Kosik, and on stories from the elderlies of the city.

The sources for the descriptions of the life of the Jews between the two World Wars I drew from testimonies of many people, especially from testimonies of Blaziechic, the previous community leader (secretary); also testimonies of Vidala, a clerk in the community in Demblin; on the writing and lists of Mr. Yandzjevsky, and also on my personal observations.

My descriptions of the period of the German occupation were based on the testimonies of Yandzjevsky, Kosik, Blazjesky, Vidala and Viakovshek and also on my personal memoirs.

February 7, 1967

THUS WAS JEWISH DEMBLIN DESTROYED

BY TZVI EICHENBRENNER / TEL AVIV

From the material of Tel Aviv, Yad Vashem No. Aleph-191/2681

1

Winter of 1941. With my wife and child I fled the Warsaw Ghetto. After traveling the whole night in a darkened rail car together with gentiles on a cold early morning after a lot of danger, we finally arrived at Demblin. The city made a very sad and frightening impression on me. The burned down study house, which the Germans had set afire soon after their arrival, had given the street and the environment a frightening aspect. The emptied and deadly quiet of the city, the shut down businesses and workshops, the pitiful and poor expression of the people who had already suffered so much at the hands of the Germans, all this worked on me very intensely. From the Jews' eyes looked out a sense of terror and great insecurity. Every morning they would come out all worn out, hungry, ragged, and be driven to forced labor at the airfield and at other places. Often, after a whole day's work, they would return beat up and bloody. As a result of hunger and terrible living conditions many epidemics spread through the town, death was lurking in the Jewish houses.

Despite all of this, after the hell of the Warsaw ghetto, where I lived with hundreds of thousands of other Jews in what was for all intents and purposes a living grave between towering walls of the ghetto, I felt a little bit lighter and easier like I could breathe a little bit easier when I first came to Demblin, because here at least, you could see the world. You could see all of the land around, you could see as far as the eye would reach. The fields covered with snow, the forest of Ryki, the little villages around, the small peasants' huts with the pointed roofs whose whiteness shown in the distance.

Jews were still able to make their way around here. There wasn't a formal ghetto yet. We were even able to travel from one city to another and to go into the countryside a little bit. There was also contact between the commander of the city and the police and the Judenrat, whose president, Leizor Teichman, an honorable and wise man, who knew how to make his way around, how to deal with the Germans, all of which he did with great responsibility, never dirtying his conscience. He had an in with the police, the commander of the town. He bribed them with the most precious goods, with shoes and clothes and in that way, as much as he could he would make our bitter fate a little bit easier. The constant dragging people off to forced labor stopped because the Judenrat began to send skilled workers out anyway according to the lists that were already prepared.

When an S.S. officer, or another German functionary would come into town, the Judenrat had already been notified and they did their best to prepare things. When there was something unfortunate that happened and a Jew fell into custody, the Judenrat did everything it could do to set them free.

I lived with my wife and child in a little half sunken house that was extremely old and that was where my parents lived. That house was situated across from the burned out study house. Right by the entrance at the right side of the kitchen, in the little narrow place between the oven and the wall, we were just barely able to get a bed set down with a cover to block it off like a curtain and that was my room. In the same house, besides my father, Ahron Chaim-Yidels and my mother, Rochma, the baker's wife and also my sister Zlotah, who was a widow, with her two small children, lived.

In the house they also had with them a Torah that had been saved from the synagogue when the synagogue was burned down, with two Torah scrolls. Everyday, early in the morning and before dark, desperate and humiliated Jews would come in and wrap a scarf around their faces so that their shaven faces, that didn't have beards anymore, wouldn't be seen. And here with a very heavy mood and with great terror, a minyan prayed together. This was a place where we also talked about all the news and all the events that were going on.

In our house, the old tailors of the burial society were sitting. They had pale, fallen faces, swollen eyes and out of those eyes you could see both despair and apathy. They would sit bent over the old white sheets and they seemed like ghosts themselves as if they'd just risen from the grave. They sewed shrouds of their sisters and brothers, the martyrs.

The leader of the burial society was an old Jew from another locality who had come here during the War. Tall with a thick, wide face, kind of grubby payes, a short little gray beard and he was called "Chubby Chaim". We would always turn to him about all matters of substance. He seemed like he just never got tired and even in the most difficult moments he was able to respond and arrange things quickly and with great facility. And he gave everybody heart, he cheered people up. If you did find him every once in a while sitting there on the bench with his big watery eyes closed for just a moment, you knew it was only going to last very briefly and he'd be back on his feet almost immediately.

We didn't shut the door the whole day. Jews like shadows, broken and worn out, with their pale faces and eyes the light of which was almost extinguished, in those eyes you could see the sorrow of the whole world. With their last strength they would come and tell of the tragedy that had hit them. Here and there, when the tragedy got worse and was amplified, we were always the first to get the news. Especially in situations where somebody was in a very difficult bind, in custody or something like that, where there was still a chance of saving them.

Jews would make their way, run from one city to another, desperately. In Demblin, the Germans would pull them off the train. Then, after tormenting them with the worse possible tortures, they would throw them to savage dogs, which would tear them apart while they were still alive and then finally the murderers would finish them off with a shot. The mutilated, battered, dead bodies, were sent into the town in a wagon.

The way for the Jews was really terrifying, those who were on the road were fleeing Warsaw and other cities. But even more terrifying and frightful was what they had to tell about the ghetto. Although in Demblin there still was not a formal ghetto, these dark tidings foreshadowed something very bad. The desperation multiplied. Each was terrified of the unavoidable horrors that awaited them.

Someone told me that they brought a dead Jew from the station, who had been traveling by train and who had died of fright. Until Sunday in the morning the Judenrat had been able to put him up in Moshe Abramtsh's house. It was late at night when I came to Moshe's house and the house had a very Sabbath like quiet about it. On the table, two small candles burned. They were dripping onto an old conserve's box. Moshe, with his wife and children, walked around in the house as if there were nothing special going on. The clay floor was scattered with sand.

On the ground near the window, with his face to the wall, the dead man lay, dressed in a brown suit and shoes, his face wasn't even covered over.

2

Quickly the frightening news spread over the town that they'd murdered the president of the Judenrat, Leizor Teichman. Our situation got worse from day to day. Not one day passed where they didn't bring Jews that they'd shot, from the railroad.

And it didn't take long before the city once again shuddered and had a new and savage murder. This time, the Gendarmes ordered the Judenrat that all Jews who had come to Demblin from other ghettos and cities should within a very short time present themselves. Police ran around throughout the city with a list of the unfortunate ones. They were dragged out of their houses. Gendarmes took the terrified victims and loaded them into sealed vehicles, took them to the forest of Ryki and murdered them there.

As I entered the threshold of our house one time, I felt that there was again another terrible event. As always, my heart began to beat furiously. My mother's thin drawn face was even paler than usual. Some of the tailors had laid their gray heads onto the table, as if they were snoozing. Even Chubby Chaim, who always seemed to be impervious to everybody sat there at the bench with his face

between both of his hands and his eyes stared blankly into the distance. When desperate and overwrought Jews came to ask that their dead should be buried, they didn't have anyone to talk to.

[See PHOTO-C50 at the end of Section C]

From Laibish Bagelman I found out that today they had again brought from the railroad a family of 9 people. As always, I couldn't control my inner drive to go and see the dead. I went back to the burned out synagogue near the bath where they used to bring the victims from the train. Before my eyes a truly horrifying scene was revealed. On the ground, stretched out, were the victims, one next to the other. Only one, whose face and long thin fingers were blacker than the earth, had been murdered with the standard shot under the ear. With the others, under very fine but ripped up clothes, one could see that their bodies were a mass of bloody wounds from dogs teeth, the heads and faces just a mass of blood. There wasn't any recognizable human feature in their faces. The children's arms and legs had been broken. You didn't even see a sign of a shot on the children. They looked like they'd been hacked to death with a very dull knife.

Each day Jews, earlier than usual, came to daven. Each one was sure that something important happened because the whole night the Gendarmes were whooping it up. We heard them making great cries of joy, they were really celebrating, screaming their heads off. The Jews who lived in the Warshavsky street didn't close their eyes the whole night because of terror. The restlessness grew from minute to minute. Everybody's eyes were turned to each person who came in the room last, expecting them to tell us something, God forbid, really bad, and perhaps something really good. Everything is possible from God, even at the last minute.

The butcher David Yermus, came in. He kissed the mezuzah, washed his hands in the basin. But, before he wrapped a kerchief around his face to hide his shaven beard he said, "They're talking something about peace in the street..."

The Jews with their pale terrified faces and tallit and tfillin just stayed there absolutely astounded.

"Thank God!", I heard my mother in the background, who was sick and was lying in bed. She was talking to God and she said, "With you God everything is possible, a miracle. But a miracle, only a miracle, will save the children. Isn't it already high time?"

Two Jews looked at each other. One was the very pious Jew, the one who led prayers, David Wasserman, who during the Sabbath would never say anything secular, he to the very last minute of his life, in the greatest of danger, kept his gold blond beard, which had already begun to be gray. The second was David

Fuks, a Hasid, who's beard had just begun to grow back, a gray beard that had the appearance of a wheat field which was full of stubble.

"In the peace of the villains", a thought David said after a minute. With the same thoughtfulness he added, "With brutes like these, who have spilled so much blood, there's never going to be any peace. I hope that what I say is not true, I'm afraid that their joy is our sorrow."

The last words of the two Jews were like heavy stones fallen in my heart. I went out to Barryl Sherman. He from the very first moment the Germans arrived, worked for them at the police station. And he always knew all of the news. I thought that maybe I'd find out something from him about what was going on.

3

I was not the only one who was waiting for Barryl. I encountered other Jews there, thoughtful and worried. Even one of the members of the Judenrat was waiting there to find something out. The anticipation was so great that we just didn't say a word to each other. When we saw Barryl through the window my heart began to pound like a hammer. The seriousness on his face, which was not his usual expression, wasn't lost on us.

When he came into the house we realized from his glance, which was avoiding us, that things were not good. Nobody took their eyes off of him. Nobody had the guts to ask him what we all wanted to know. The waiting seemed like an eternity. Finally Barryl, not looking anybody in the eyes, quiet and desperate, as if he had to gather up all his strength to do so, said, "Very bad news for you."

In the house everything became quiet, the only thing that we heard was the beating of our heart.

"Hitler, -- proclaimed yesterday, -- the total eradication of all Jews." The joy of the brutes, of the barbarians, was so great that I can't even describe it to you. They spent the whole night eating and drinking they were so delighted. And believe me they pored the absolute best liquors down their throats.

When Avramal Rosenberg mentioned that this means us, nobody was able to even stand on their feet anymore. We didn't say it out loud, but everybody understood that now the Germans were really going to get to it and set up more ghettos, meaning here.

The darkest night of all times had fallen. Despair and desperation ate away at the worn out and used up Jews of Demblin. Each one waited his own bitter fate with terror. The whole thing was the most terrible for the hearts of the elderly. It is

unimaginable and impossible to describe the sorrow and pain that we suffered when we looked at little innocent children who understood nothing and had to die such a savage death so young.

The Judenrat instructed that according to an order from the German command, that practically the whole city with the name Warshavsky street and both ends of Rynek, all the way down to Sokatzkyega -- that none of that was part of the ghetto. After a very short time all the Jews who lived in those places had to get out and go into the ghetto which was delineated by half of Okulna with little half sunken shacks around the burned out synagogue and the old part of the town where before Jews had not lived.

It became very dark in the city. After work, the worn out Jews ran like you run in the middle of a fire. Bent over with packs on their backs, terror in their eyes, the last bit of strength, they pushed themselves. They carried heavy cabinets, beds, tables and other things. They were stuffed into little houses, to relatives or acquaintances or to people they didn't know at all.

Richer Jews would bend over, embarrassed, faces found themselves at shabby little Christian dwellings and suggested an exchange. That in order for them to be able to have these little Christian houses, they could exchange them for their own very comfortable dwellings on Warshavsky street. The Poles, though, were in no hurry. They had time. There were so many Jews who suggested this to them. They told the Jews to leave their furniture back in their houses. They said to the Jews, "It's all the same, you're not going to live through this war anyway, what do you need your furniture for?"

As much as that galled and tore them apart, the Jews had absolutely no other option. Everything that the Christians wanted in this situation, they got.

4

Humiliated, torn apart from the outside world, stuffed together in a terrible squalor without any air to breath, Jews lived several families to one dwelling. As if somebody had just winked to him and there was an understanding, the Pole who used to drive around with a long wooden barrel with which he'd clean out the outhouses of the town, he just stopped coming into the ghetto. So the overflowing outhouses began to overflow and run out into the courtyards. The air stank, mountains of garbage lay outside. Hungry cats spent the whole day foraging through all this stuff. From day to day the scarcity intensified because the peasants, as in every war, were the ones who had everything that was really essential, and they stopped coming in their wagons into town to bring products from their fields. Jews didn't dare to venture out into the country side because it was extremely dangerous. When they did that, often a Pole on his own initiative

would chase after the Jew and go fetch a policeman and rat on him. The hunger became very, very great. In many houses there wasn't a slice of bread for weeks. Even the very, very thin soup that we did have became very seldom. Most of the Jews nourished themselves with raw *Brikev*. They were drawn and swollen from hunger and they'd die off like flies.

"Typhus Danger! Strictly forbidden for Germans to enter!" That's the way big placards which were nailed up to houses around the periphery of the ghetto read in order to warn the Germans away.

In truth the ghetto was full of other sicknesses like tuberculosis and dysentery, there were not fewer victims from these diseases than there were from typhus. The world will never know the magnitude of the sorrow and pain of the unfortunate and desperate Jewish mothers, who sat by the beds of their sick children utterly unable to help, except with a cold compress on the brow or with a little bit of cold water to wet their burning lips.

It's difficult to convey the terrible barrenness that reined throughout the day in the ghetto. Very, very seldom did you see a man in the street during the day. Very early in the morning the ghetto residents had to go out to work. Even 12 year old children didn't dare remain in the ghetto. Soon, at night, when the people returned, tired and broken, often bloody and beaten up, outside it was already dark, the whole day everyone felt behind him the shadow of death. But even more terrible was the night of the ghetto. After 7 o'clock nobody dared to appear in the street. Doors and shutters were closed. The people living there hung curtains up in order that, God forbid, the least little bit of light shouldn't make its way out a window. In this kind of darkness Demblin had never before had to wrap itself. Little ghetto houses in this kind of darkness became even smaller and shrunken. You hardly noticed them. It seemed as if a giant devil hovered above the city with his black outstretched wings which blocked out the sky and with which he wanted everybody and everything to blot out. The terrifying funereal stillness reined in the ghetto. Each step from a military boot resounded in a frightening way through the stillness of the night in the whole ghetto. And when you heard it, the heart nearly died from fear. And if the steps would suddenly stop under somebody's window, everybody would freeze inside. The way of the nights was just to stretch out endlessly.

Besides the Gendarmes police, the Sonder service ruled in the ghetto. These people were formidable brutes who wore on their hats the insignia of a skull. We really did call them "Death Heads". Woe is to him who fell into their hands.

Not only with hunger and other sorrows did the Germans torment us, they were always striving to find new physical and spiritual pain to inflict on us. They used to let loose savage dogs on their victims, or with big fat sticks beat people mercilessly on their head and their bodies so that the victim would finally beg to

be put out of their misery with a shot. In order to darken our lives even further and to demonstrate what a terrible end awaited us, they used to drive the bodies that had been mutilated and shot around in the ghetto on a wagon. Every day the Jews who'd been through the ringer so many times received new blows and new decrees. The days ahead of us were to be harder and harder.

5

Besides the various work sites where Jews were employed, there was a construction site in Demblin which belonged to the military airfield. When I came to work there in the shoemaker and tailor shop which serviced the Germans, there was already a camp at the airfield surrounded by barbed wire. In the camp we shoemakers and tailors lived in a separate little room which was partitioned off from the wooden barracks by a thin wall. When we wanted to we were able to go into the town, even spend the night there with our families. In the camp there were a couple of hundred Jews from Warsaw. The majority of them were young; flowers of the people. They were employed at different kinds of work out in the open. Some of their clothes were in shreds and you were able to see little parts of their flesh through them. While they worked they were beaten quite murderously, it really was painful to watch how they were treated.

As long as the camp was run by a simple young man, Yichael Luxemburg, the tired hungry slaves more or less would lay down and rest, have an opportunity after their difficult labors to lie down on their hard bunks and they didn't have to endure quite so many humiliations. But when the Germans brought from Opola the Viennese Jew, to the construction site, things got a lot worse in the camp. Among the Jews that they brought were Herman Venkart. Tall and broad, with a long, red, narrow nose, upon which sat thick glasses. He had a very sharp tongue. He could tear the world to pieces with that tongue. He wasn't particularly choosy about the methods that he used. For each German, even those who didn't demand it, he would stand straight at attention. Never did he turn back from his plans. That's how he quickly succeeded in taking over the command post of the camp from Luxemburg. He immediately began to institute a regime in the camp with all his little fine points. The Germans themselves couldn't have asked for anything more. He formed a Jewish command structure with Jewish police, although none of the police were forced into that role. The majority of them were just heartless youths without a spark of humanity, without shame and without a conscience. They would flatter Venkart like dogs, always try to please him, smile at everything he had to say. There were a few exceptions, but very few.

And this Viennese Jew, who came from Gilitsia and who was very fond of when he spoke, praising and remembering the Lord -- every Passover he had a seder and read the Haggadah. This person, besides other kinds of pain that he inflicted on

people, would also beat them. According to the decree from our camp commander, Herman Venkart, the Jewish police showed that they could be every bit as evil as the other brutes. When the victim lay on a bench, his head covered with a blanket, and just moaned with his sufferings, the Jewish police had a good laugh and in the way of young men would whistle in mockery. There were times when the one who had been beaten from the sheer trauma and pain would move their bowels and it would be days before they would be able to sit up.

6

From a sudden waking, I was in the first moment completely confused, as with open eyes I looked at the four white asbestos walls and the ceiling and I wasn't able to figure out where I was. Only when my thoughts returned, because of a cry that I heard outside, I suddenly jumped from my bunk, went outside in the courtyard of the camp and there saw a terrible site.

On a bench, across from the barracks, stretched out with his face down, only in his underwear, was a young inmate of the camp who they caught a few days before in Gniewoszow. Near him, surrounded by police, the commandant with a whip in hand stood and beat the boy. Suddenly the commandant heard my scream that he should stop beating him, and he turned to me. His face was white as the wall with rage, like a beast's, it looked like the expression of a beast who's claws had just been torn out of its prey. He turned to me and screamed, "He wanted to get out of here, the criminal, and we brought him back from the road."

It was still very early in the morning. The clock showed 4 o'clock. Everything surrounding was enveloped in a pre dawn gray summer quiet. The tired slaves were still in the barracks on their hard bunks lying and sleeping. One inmate wrapped in a gray blanket limped towards the wooden outhouse which stood at the other end of the camp by the barbed wire. He barely was able to drag his bad foot. The early morning was cool and dismal. The cloudy sky seemed to suggest that rain was going to come soon. In the field the peasant's white horse had spent the whole night in a meadow near the camp where he could chew the grass. The whole day the colt would, in a care free way, jump around in the field and the children used to always look at him with envy and curiosity. This colt was snuggling up to his mother's belly. Both of them stood with their heads bent down to the moist grass and didn't move. A thick heavy rain shower began to come down. A world of shame at that moment wept.

In the morning, Sunday, when I went to the old part of town, I suddenly saw people running by who were looking in the direction of the bridge. I ran after them and saw in the distance the young man Gemaliel the son of Perla Hochman, Gemaliel had a half sack of potatoes on his back. Beside him a policeman was standing with a revolver in his hands. Afterwards the policeman disappeared for a

moment into a peasant's hut alongside the road. He came back with a shovel with which he began to beat Gemaliel on the hands and over his whole body. His crying out and trying to defend himself didn't help at all. Finally the gendarme hit Gemaliel a few times over the head. When he fell down, blood spilling out of him, he took out his gun and shot him.

A little bit later we saw his head and his body, his head which was hacked at, hanging down, looked like a frozen mass, and he was at that point taken through town on a wagon, the head hanging over. At that moment we remembered how this boy's father took him the first day, wrapped in a tallit to heder, to study.

7

After each terrible new news, nobody in the ghetto would show themselves at all. There was a heavy burden that laid everybody down. It was a burden with a spark of terror that always glowed in each heart. Suddenly that spark with a great, terrible flame, would burn up and consume every last hope of being saved or surviving. Jews, full of desperation, would lament their living children. Chubby Chaim tried to cheer up the tailors of the burial society who spent the whole day bent sewing old white sheets into shrouds in order to prepare a body for a Jewish burial. He reminded them it was a mitzvah to do that, especially today when the murderous villains would every day leave dead bodies lying on the side of the road which the dogs and other wild beasts would then start to feast upon.

As soon as he sat down at a bench with his big watery eyes and began to look off at some spot in the air, the door slowly opened and a woman came in. She walked bent over, dressed in an old ragged thick cloak, which she held with her thin hands. Her half gray hair was in wild disorder. From the pallor of her face and her tired half shut eyes, one understood that the days of her life were numbered. As soon as she crossed the threshold, she fell on the half sunken floor and remained lying there, just passed out, fainted. We revived her, sat her down on a chair. She cried bitterly. Holding her self, she began to tell her sad story, to complain:

"Why don't you just let me die?" She complained bitterly in a heart rending way. "Why do I have to force myself to live any longer? For my child, for who's death I alone am responsible? Why does so much suffering have to come to me? Who have I done anything bad to? It would have been better if I had been scattered under the ruins with my husband. Then I wouldn't have to see my only child consumed by fever. For two days he was sick. And now he is no more. When I went out to work early in the morning and asked Leah to keep an eye on him, my son just like the day before, sat in bed and there wasn't any real sign that he was going to get worse. He seemed OK. But, as soon as I arrived at work, I became very, very uneasy. A mother's heart began to beat with terror. I just wasn't able

to get a hold of myself. I didn't even feel the blows of the overseers who always like to knock us around. I had one desire alone and that was to live until the evening. To my distress, the murderers decided to keep us longer than usual. I just can't understand that after the whole day of work, how I found the strength to run all the way home. The closer I came to the house, the greater my fear became. With my heart pounding, I opened the door. And when I came into the house I saw that my world had come apart and that my son had been extinguished. In the house there was a melancholy quiet. The child was the only reason that I had the strength to endure all the different kinds of pain and torment. He lay in bed, his head wrapped with a wet cloth. A great darkness fell on me. The little bit of bread that I left for him in the morning, lay by him, unmoved. His lips were black as coal. His bright eyes closed. The child was just one piece of fire. 'Mommy's here', I begged him and wanted him to just look at me. But nothing more than just two tears rolled down from the corners of his eyes and then stopped. God, what am I going to do, I said to myself. Where's Leah. And just then the door opened and Leah, out of breath, came in with Dr. Kava."

"'Doctor, save my child', I screamed at him."

"The doctor didn't answer and went right to the bed. The whole time that the doctor tended to the child, my heart beat like a hammer. The doctor looked at his watch and said, 'It's already 7 o'clock. One dares not go into the streets at this hour. There's nothing we can do until tomorrow morning. Don't let one minute go by without that wet compress on his head.'"

"He went out quickly. I felt that a bitter fate had snatched me once again. The fever didn't let up. The child began to burn again. I tore the hair from my head and cried quietly. Is there anybody I didn't pray to at that moment? To my father, who the Germans had shot down, in his tallit and tfillin. To my dead husband. The night stretched out for an eternity it seemed to me. It seemed like it would never end."

"Suddenly the child, an old man, let out a sigh, opened his eyes for a moment and then closed them again. The final extinguished glance of one dying, that's what it was. Everything in me began in a misty confusion, I began to cry out, what's happening? My father shot, Isaac [husband] under the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto. And here I am imprisoned in the ghetto. Just two days ago my son was healthy. Now I sit all alone by his bed. Everybody was sleeping and I looked and my child seemed like he'd just been consumed by fever. I was quiet and I did nothing. I stood up, the whole house revolved around me. I went to the window, looked out again through the cracks in the shutters, outside it was black night. I didn't see the sky at all. Black and dark, like it was in my heart. Terrifying, deathly quiet. The quiet of a world that was ending. God, what should I do? When will the dawn come? I went to the window again. When I came back to the bed I saw my child lying with his head thrown back and with his mouth open. I

started to tear my hair and scream. Everybody, terrified, came out from their bed and asked me to calm down because it can create an even worse tragedy if I don't shut up. Sure enough, very soon, we heard a demanding scream, 'Open up!' They'd already begun banging at the door with their rifles. Two gendarmes came in. They saw the dead child. One of them made a little joke about it. 'What are you screaming about? You cursed woman. You're all going to die like dogs, you know.' Yeah, Yeah, that's exactly what should happen was a thought that came to my head. 'Shoot me!', I begged them. 'I want to die with my child. I can't take it anymore.' I begged them for their mercy."

"'What, you want to die?', another one of the murderers asked. 'No, not now. When you want to live, that's when we're going to shoot you.' He said with a smile on his lips."

"Such a sudden terrible loss", the woman said quietly sobbing. "But, I am guilty for the death of my child. I shouldn't have left him alone", the woman said, leaving.

When the woman left, I turned to Laibish Bagelman, who the whole time sat at his bench with great attention and listened to the woman's story of her bitter heart. I asked him, "How many corpses would show up in this War during the course of one year?"

"Yeah," Laibish sighed. "I understand Hershel what you want to know. Once upon a time, during the whole year, there would be like 12 corpses. And that was a bad year. Today, it's not a day goes by when we don't have 15, and that's a good day. There's absolutely nothing to which anyone can compare this enormous tragedy of ours.", he said with great sorrow. "Jews are falling like flies. They're coming to us dead as a result of all kinds of violent deaths. And for the German villains, it's never enough. A regime like the Germans, is one that has never been seen before."

A frightful cry was heard outside and with every second just got greater and more intense and Laibish stopped talking.

8

When I went out of the house I saw a scene which could have broken the stoniest of hearts. Around a narrow wagon drawn by a skinny, half-dead horse, this was the wagon upon which they'd always bring the murdered ones into the town, we saw almost hanging on with their little hands, 7 or 8 little barefoot children in torn rags, hoarse from crying. With their last strength they cried out and sobbed, "Dear mommy, why are you leaving us?". The mother, who during the war had been the only provider in the house, had just been murdered when she was

coming back from the town with a few potatoes on her back. She lay on the wagon covered with a rag. All you could see were her thin, barefoot feet. Their father, Kevela, a small and worn out man with a sobbing face blacker than the earth, hung on to the last part of the wagon and just barely was able to walk behind it.

When the wagon came to the end of the ghetto, voices reached heaven. It absolutely was shattering to watch how they had to tear the little children away from their dead mother. Christians who were passing by stopped for a moment and asked who was being carried away. With a little bit of sorrow they shook their heads and kept going on their way.

Without shelter, resigned and hopeless, surrounded by millions of bloody executioners, who weren't able to satiate themselves with our downfall and did everything so that not even one Jew would escape their grasp. In the heart of enslaved Europe which the barbarians had transformed into a jungle and in which a terrifying and quick and thorough extermination of Jews had begun, in such a condition one had no hope of outliving the war, unless as the result of a miracle or some sudden and unexpected help and quick. But from where would such help come? Nobody knew. From England? We heard only the most sorrowful news. And that just made us more dark and bitter. There wasn't anything else but blood and tears. And Churchill himself had nothing more to say than that to his people. America needed to be ready at the very earliest in 1943 to prepare itself. Maybe from Russia? But already for the second time the gigantic convoys of military vehicles were traveling day and night on all the roads. The word was that they were going in the direction of the Russian border. Some Poles had for awhile pretended not to even know their Jewish acquaintances, but now some of them began to greet us. A good friend of mine came to me in a very discreet way, and said, "Hold on, it's not going to be long." We were even talking to each other at night when it was quiet. When we were laying down, if you put your ear to the ground, you could hear the dull thud of artillery in the distance. A spark of hope began to shine in us. Jews foraged in the newspapers and looked for a trace. It really did not take a long time and after awhile the military began to travel back in the other direction. Everything remained as it was before. Darker and more hopeless. Our situation became worse and every new day there were new victims.

The devilish plan of the villains was so savage in its scope that something had happened in us and we wanted more than to just stay alive. Everyone wanted revenge for his death and for his downfall. And so when the Jews heard that the Germans had increased the numbers of tailors and that they'd begun to black out the windows with curtains and began to paint over the military buildings in green, we grabbed at these things as signs like a drowning man grabs at a floating log in the ocean.

When the worn out, pale, ghetto Jews heard the news early one morning while praying, their tired, half shut eyes turned to the sky and began to sigh with a heart that was being torn, *Mah tovu ohalech Yaacov*. Each day would come really different news and every time the Jews would sigh and groan while they were praying.

9

Suddenly the Germans covered all of their military vehicles and buildings with gray and green nets to camouflage them. The electric street lamps were turned off. They gave the order that the windows and houses should be blacked out and in the courtyards bomb shelters should be dug. Now everybody was sure that something was really happening. Maybe we were going to be saved. Our hearts were just very anxious and yet we couldn't believe it. Maybe on the other hand the Germans were just preparing for normal war exercises, just to prepare against air raids. Maybe they really weren't preparing to defend themselves against the Russians. And maybe in fact we'd just worked ourselves up into a frenzy here and just fooled ourselves with our imaginings. But meanwhile the normal kinds of torments didn't seize. Soon though, the police at the airfield began to patrol in the city in big motorized vehicles, they began to run back and forth along the roads in a great stream and the grinding of their steel chains was deafening. The highways were torn up. Two weeks, day and night, these military convoys passed through. The window pains in the little houses trembled, they almost came apart from the clamor of heavy artillery. Nobody slept a wink during the night. Nobody could sleep. The tired, stressed out head just couldn't stop thinking, wondering if this could really be happening. It was really hard to believe that there still was some help for us left in the world. Wouldn't a snake before she was consumed and destroyed find a way to let her poison out? Isn't that why they herded us into the ghettos after all?

When the tanks stopped traveling and became quiet again the Jews terrified and pale began to move around as if they were crazy. The quietness lasted for two days. At night big bombers flew overhead, over the city, in the direction of the east. The whole sky in the area was full of their roaring. We really saw very vividly the preparations for war. Any moment it was about to break out.

Jewish technicians, who worked for the German radio center, risked their lives in order to listen in on Moscow radio, they tried to find something from the radio about what they would say at this moment before the storm, about what was happening. But it was as if nothing had happened. Nothing but music and every once and a while they talked about with great praise a new milking machine. We became once again quite uneasy and depressed. It seemed that this was the fate after all, there was no getting around it, this was the sad fate of our generation. If

only we could know that sooner or later these people would have to pay dearly for what they'd done.

After a whole night without sleep I got up with a heavy and bitter mood and got ready to go to work. A Jew came to pray, knocked on the shut door and I came to the entry way in order to open the door. I was able to recognize that this was Yisrael Yankl, the baker.

"You're still sleeping?" the Jew said to me quietly, "You're still sleeping when there's such good news?"

"What kind of good news?" I asked him quickly and shut the door.

"You don't know? They're fighting already." The Jew who had wrapped the tallit around his coat quietly, with a held back voice and with tears in his eyes, said.

"Who's fighting?", I asked him astonished.

"Who do you think should be fighting?", the Jew asked me quite bewildered. "The angel of justice and the angel of death are fighting. They're saying that after today, the Russians are going to be here.", he told me with a very serious face.

Soon, still more Jews came over. Most everybody already knew the news. We didn't spend too much time praying and davening. Everyone wanted to get home as soon as possible. More serious than usual, they stood there, their tallisim wrapped over their heads, deep in their own thoughts. "Oh, great creator of the world," one after another said with a great groan.

When I went outside into the beautiful summer early morning, the sky was clear and transparent without the slightest little cloud. The surroundings were wrapped in the pre dawn quiet. The rising sun very slowly climbed over the edge of the horizon and began to spread her first rays upon the earth. One didn't see a single German anywhere in town, Jews were standing around in the courtyard, waiting for the Russians to come. They wondered why everything was so quiet. The front was after all only 30-40 miles away when the siren began to suddenly sound. The Jews became afraid another way. We didn't run to the bunkers that we dug but we remained where we were, watched the heavens because we had a lot more fear of the Germans than we did from the Russian bombers.

"Maybe it's better today not to go to work. Maybe if we don't do that it's better just to stay at home", the Jews asked each other. Nobody knew what to answer. Afterwards we saw somebody began to walk by and we decided we would go as well. On the way we continually looked at the sky, we thought that maybe at work we'd learn something. But at work as well, we saw no Germans at all. The mood became very, very cheerful. We were even taking bets about when the

Russians were going to arrive. Nobody even put their hands to the work at hand at all. Suddenly something shattered the mood. All the time we would try to find somebody to get the scoop from the Germans at the construction site and tried to spy a little bit or maybe try to figure out what was going on from the Polish work camp. But we were unsuccessful, we couldn't find anything out. It was getting to be very difficult to not know anything like this.

We sat around there for about 2 hours. Nothing happened. At that point various thoughts, each one worse than the one before, began to hammer away at us. Our nerves got on edge. Nobody was able to rest. It seemed like everybody's thoughts were turning in the worse direction and our little moment had run out.

It was in the early afternoon when we saw one of the Germans coming towards us. He was a man over 60. We sat up straight, as if we'd been working. Our hearts started to beat quite fast because the demeanor of this man's walk and his little way of whistling to himself suggested that what we were going to hear wasn't going to be good. As soon as he crossed the threshold of the workshop, he threw his head back and with great pride said, "Ah, my gentlemen. That which I'm going to tell you will give you enormous pleasure. The Russians have already been defeated."

With his bastard's eyes, he looked out from under his thick glasses and observed us.

"Yep, I bring you my news today and my uniform for you to make adjustments on it. You'll do that for me, won't you?". And he quickly left.

My heart was torn up. Everybody was pale, pale as the wall. Everybody remained sitting at their place. Quick as lightening the dark news the German had brought spread. Soon somebody from the office came [a Jew] and just roamed around the room as if he was crazy.

"You hear the news? The Germans took Bialystok." He almost wept. When somebody asked him if that was really true he almost screamed, "They're already planning to send a couple of hundred Jews from here to there".

Sad, bitter, dark, was everybody's mood. We were jealous of the dead at that point. And just at that moment, just as if to spite us, just as before you couldn't see a German anywhere you looked, at that moment they didn't stop coming in and out of the door. They brought their uniforms and their shoes to be repaired. They brought their orders, just as if they were getting ready for a parade. Just for good measure, they'd stand around and look everybody over a little bit longer than usual.

Certain of their quick victory, the Germans became even more savage. Jewish blood flowed even more freely than before. At work, the Germans extracted the last breath out of their slaves and added to that they would beat them mercilessly. Broken and desperate the Jews went back to the ghetto after work. Nobody was asking anymore about the latest news. For whole days the Germans had signs in all the streets and they would deafen the whole town with their latest bulletins and news. "We have dealt communism, the greatest enemy of human kind, a decisive blow. It won't be long before we completely destroy and exterminate it." A second time the greatest villain thanked all mighty God because he had been chosen to create the reign of a thousand years of peace for the world. "Eight-hundred tanks, 1,400 airplanes, a thousand artillery units, a whole army and we still haven't counted everything that we have, but these are the things that we've already taken in the first days". The cripple Goebbels, the German propaganda minister, like a beast gone wild, spoke spasmodically, screamed on the radio. Each day the newspapers told of new, greater German victories. Your heart bled to see maps that were displayed in public which showed the front lines with the conquered cities and towns where we knew thousands of Jews were living. Once again, despair reigned in the ghetto. Again life became a hell for us. Frightful nightmares and sleepless nights battered us. A huge undeniable reality hit us as soon as we opened our eyes.

The two of us used to meet in those days on the way to work. We walked the whole way together. I and Gamaliel Hochman, a cousin from the other Gamaliel about whom I spoke earlier. Gamaliel was a young man, over 20 years old, with a full, serious and refined face. From behind his glasses a pair of thoughtful and pleasant, wise eyes shown forth. Gamaliel's heart could overflow with bitterness, but you'd never know it by looking at him. His black boots were always very well polished and all of his clothes were always very clean and neat. Even the old worn out coat that he used to wear was always cleanly pressed, spotless, without the slightest stain of any kind. Even the white linen arm band with the blue Star of David, which every Jew had to wear on his left arm and we of course always tried to make it as unnoticeable as possible, as narrow as possible, even that on Gamaliel's arm was very clean and without a wrinkle. Gamaliel spoke little and understood a great deal. But though he was by nature quiet, on this occasion he apparently was so troubled and tormented by his thoughts that he spoke the whole way about the latest tragedies and the new hell that had befallen us; about the Russian cities which had fallen and with them the great numbers of Jews who would now be defenseless, people who just a few days before had been living peacefully and without fear. When vehicles with military people passed by on their way to the front Gamaliel looked after them and said, "Go ahead, go ahead, you're going to come back here in the other direction crippled and mutilated, without hands and feet."

We were walking along that way, Gamaliel and I, when we came to the entrance to the airfield. There stood an armed soldier with a metal helmet on his head. We showed him our passes which gave us permission to enter into the work place. We just wanted to continue on but the German didn't feel like hurrying in returning our passes to us. He looked at Gamaliel and didn't take his eyes off him. I became very uneasy and my heart began to beat.

The German was breathing heavily and with a quiet sadism said to Gamaliel:

"You're a Jew, right?"

"Yeah," Gamaliel answered.

"Why don't you take your hat off then? Think you're better than I am?" The German in a very disdainful and sarcastic way asked him.

At that point for the first time I noticed that Gamaliel was wearing his hat. Maybe he's forgotten I thought to myself. He will certainly take it off right away and we'll just go on our way. But to my great astonishment I saw that Gamaliel didn't make the slightest move to take his hat off.

"What?!" The German began to scream and became red with anger. "You piece of shit. You're not going to take your hat off for a German? You Jew pig. You're not going to make fun of me. I'll show you."

He reached for his rifle.

"Listen," he said once again. "I'm going to count to three, and if you don't take your hat off you'll see what is going to happen."

I looked at Gamaliel. He was pale and absolutely still as he stared at the German. He didn't even blink his eyes. I saw that Gamaliel was ready for anything and that he was not going to bend his pride.

"One," the German began to count. "Two," he drew out the word and looked at Gamaliel. After waiting a minute he screamed out, "Three!" And Gamaliel, who was standing there frozen, threw his hand up and took the hat off his head. The German gave us our passes back and said:

"Get out of here, you swine!"

The whole way after that we practically didn't say a word. When we came into the work place we told about our encounter with a heavy mood and sat down to work. At that moment a soldier opened the door (who was by trade a tailor) and came in. He often used to sew with us for the German officers. Half a day with

us and he wouldn't say a word the whole time he was there. But this time when their joy over their victories was so painful to us, just for spite he came in a little bit earlier than usual. From his booming good morning which was hardly his style, we understood that our worn out nerves were going to be subjected to another onslaught by his visit.

He sat down without being asked, and very cheerfully told about the colossal victories of the Germans on the eastern front. "We're going to do Russia in very quickly", he said.

The whole time that the German spoke, Gamaliel did not sew. His face became paler than usual. He looked at the German without moving. The German's face was full of color and joy, a great happy light in his eyes. Everybody saw that Gamaliel had passed through something quite horrible and that he had committed everything with great precision to his own memory. You could see that from his face, but it wasn't until a lot later that we learned what it was.

It's not possible to describe the pain that we endured in those sorrowful and terrifying days. The further the Germans went forward, the deeper the bloody wound went into our hearts.

11

In a matter of weeks Hitler's army was already at the gates of Moscow.

Certain of their victory, the two-footed beasts revealed themselves in all their savagery. From the punishment camp, which they built for Jews in the city, at night we heard heart rendering screams of the tortured. In the first days they brought to us the first victim, the Jew Tzezek, who they beat to death. His whole body was a mass of blows and mutilation. There was also talk about deporting the Jews from the regions that had been taken over in Russian territory. We were completely cut off from the world. We didn't know what was happening in other cities. As if in a locked cage, the Jews ran from one city to another, most of them from the big cities, Warsaw and Lublin, just trying to find someplace else to go. When it was bad in Lublin, one tried to escape to Warsaw. Most of them were rich families who wanted to save their lives. You could see them there, recognize them at the Demblin station. Because there they'd be pulled off the trains, robbed, tortured and murdered.

After awhile the placards about Germany's victories on all fronts slowly began to disappear. The newspapers began to write about difficult battles and great Russian losses. The Germans became more savage. They beat us at work and screamed that the Jews started the War.

Again we became interested in the latest news. Once again our nerves which had hit rock bottom began to waken a little bit. We hoped that if nothing happened until winter and if it hit really hard, the Russian winter, with long unrelenting frosts, with enormous snow falls, that the Germans would get stuck. And so our joy became great when it began to snow and the Germans still stood at Moscow. We knew that the Germans weren't used to the Russian brand of frost and cold and that they wouldn't come back completely victorious from that situation.

Every bit of fur for clothing the Jews were required to give away, and for not giving it up you could face death. Furious for not having succeeded with their blitzkrieg, the murderers, with a great deal of sadism, threw themselves on the Jewish population, and did everything that hard winter to torment us. They even ordered the destruction of all of the stoves in the ghetto where it had still been possible to bake a little something.

The winter was hard with long deep frost and cold and snowfalls. When it was still possible to grab a little bit of wood from one place or another we immediately chopped it up and burned it. First one piece of wooden furniture and then other kinds. The coal, which the Christians had been able to steal from the rail cars, they were too afraid to sell because they had already caught a Pole like that and forced him to confess who he had sold the coal too. He did so, he said that he had sold it to Yichtzakal Daitsher's wife. They arrested her, beat her with sticks over her naked body so that she found herself for three days between life and death.

Hunger and cold made our hands reach out and made the work of the angel of death quite easy. The tormented Jews were quiet, without a groan, fallen asleep forever. We began to run out of sheets for shrouds. How a Jew on the most dangerous of journeys had been able to make it from Warsaw to Demblin was something I couldn't understand. I asked a man like that, who was swollen, his feet wrapped with rags, somebody who was paler than the wall, how he had taken such a hazardous journey, going on foot, when every step exposed him not only to Germans, but also to the Poles. He answered me with a weak voice:

"Is anything worse than dying of hunger?"

Two days later, when a deep cold had locked in for over a week, we took this Jew away to the cemetery at Bobrownik.

In those difficult winter days, the Germans suddenly decided that all of the craftsmen should stay at the construction site, the airfield. We didn't dare to go into the town anymore. For over 6 weeks we were cut off from the town and

worried terribly about what was going on at home. It was very difficult to live with. The Poles were constantly speaking of a deportation. We decided to sneak out and find a way to go home and to see what was going on and then come back right away.

We decided to do that one night when everybody was walking out of work. Outside in the dark maybe we'd be able to avoid the watchman because of course we didn't have any permission to do this. We made our way on side roads and half the time right through the snow. We didn't say a word between us the whole way, for fear. We kept our mouth shut until we had made our way into the ghetto.

We opened the door and went into the house. Our sister was crying terribly. She hadn't seen us for so long. And a lot of bitterness had accumulated in her heart during that time. There was no heat in the house, there was a thick, frosty whiteness on the window pains. The ceiling was black with cold and dampness. The house, half-lit, was full of sadness and didn't have any of its normal, familiarity or coziness. My mother, who suffered from asthma was in bed, dressed up in rags. Her pale face was blue and black from coughing and the deep cold. When she saw us she didn't say a word, but with a great deal of sorrow looked at us with half open eyes.

When she'd heard that we'd left the camp without permission she became even paler and began to cough very hard. She asked us to go back immediately. She couldn't rest. This great, great fear reigned in the town. There were rumors going around that the devils were preparing deportation right in the middle of the worst cold of the year. We were able to just leave a few little pieces of bread in the house.

When we went out I barely said more than, "be well" to them. I couldn't say anything more, because the tears stuck in my throat. My mother with her skinny hands wiped her tearful eyes until we left the house when she didn't take her helpless eyes off of us until we left. It was the glance of a sick, feeble mother in the most brutal and frightening of times.

In the military hospital at the fortress which was full of the wounded, they brought German soldiers everyday with frostbitten hands and feet. The smile on the face of the German military tailor had long since disappeared. Once again, as he used to, he would sit there with us for half a day sewing uniforms, with a serious face and not a word passed his lips. We were also sitting, lost in our thoughts and very frightening ones. The cold which we'd hoped would be the turning point continued and even intensified. At that point they told us that we would not be put up at the camp anymore and we could sleep once again in town. In the morning, while praying, I saw the Jews, worn out, in rags shivering from the cold. I hardly recognized them. They'd changed so much in such a short time. Their

pale and thin faces. They looked like ghosts. With such an utter annihilating cold that night, we had never seen anything like it in our house. The thick layers of snow on the window pains, the frost which had settled on the walls and ceiling, shimmered like silver. The water in the bucket was frozen.

Though it had already become light outside for quite awhile, everything was quiet, even the crows who used to come into town and go at the big piles of frozen garbage and pick stuff out from under the snow, had long ago stopped trying to find anything to eat there, because except a little bit of dirty water, there wasn't anything to throw out anymore. In the fields, by contrast there was no shortage of corpses from those who had been murdered, upon which the crows could feast. "No," I said to myself, "the Germans aren't going to be able to stand up to this frost on the Russian front. I'm sure it's going to break them." My mood at that moment was quite good.

As soon as it became light outside I dressed quickly and went outside. A real heavy duty frost, the electric wires were covered with white snow, the red rising sun was finally showing itself after this cold. Very cheerful, I rubbed my ears which were feeling a little bit cold. "Aye, this is good! This is exactly the kind of cold we're supposed to have today", I thought to myself.

When I came to the highway that goes to the slaughter house I stopped in my tracks, shivering. On the wooden bridge near old Optayk's orchard, I saw Meir Bartek standing, with his hat in his hand. He was an old man and really worn out. Near him stood the infamous gendarme, Edec, who was well known for his savagery and murderous ways in the whole area. His mere appearance could make people tremble. After he had ripped out Meir Bartek's tallit, pulled it out from under his shirt, thrown it in his face, he turned around and ran into a little shack nearby. After a little while he came out with a hatchet and a bucket. "What's he going to do," I thought.

Before I could even move from where I was, the brute ran down to the frozen stream and began to chop some ice with the hatchet. Then he came back with a full bucket of freezing water and poured it over the beaten down Jew who was already trembling with cold and the water went right down through his open collar onto his body. The Jew all bent over began to run and then very soon he just fell over. When the murderer left we were able to carry the man into a nearby house.

The deep cold and snow lasted a lot longer than usual. Everybody waited for the first rays of the sun in the morning to warm their frozen bodies.

Meanwhile the Germans carried out more brutalities which froze the blood in your veins. They caught the son-in-law of Yellow Moshe in his courtyard just as he was about to leave his house and beat him savagely, broke his arms and his legs. The screaming was so murderous that it seemed that the murderers were taking living flesh out of their victim. As soon as the terrifying noise stopped a resounding shot rang out through the night and the ghetto was once again silent.

Sad news reached us. In all of the places where the Russians had fallen, the Jewish population had been deported. And of course add to that the savage crimes that the Germans were well known for. The old and the sick were often just shot on the spot, the young and the healthy were robbed and beaten murderously. Afterwards, under hail of bullets, they were driven in a stampede into locked cattle cars with barred tiny windows, packed in so close together that even standing up it wasn't possible to move the slightest, with nothing to eat and nothing to drink, no air to breath, whatever needs they had, they had to do right where they were, in the locked wagon. Often they would be that way for days on end, on a side track. And the murderers, as if they had absolutely no hearts at all, would listen to the crying of the women and children who were locked inside, and listen to them beg for water. With great sorrow and pain, the Jewish mothers, before they'd die, would have to watch the suffering of their tormented children. When everybody had in one way or another suffocated, when all the crying had ended, when the silence of the grave had descended on the car, when there wasn't a peep coming out of it anymore, at that time, a locomotive would lock onto the car and take it further.

A letter that a Christian had brought to a Jew from Demblin, from a relative of his in the Ukraine, sent shivers down our spines. He wrote to his uncle about truly terrifying things, things that were really unbelievable. "It's the end of the world, when people are capable of things like this. I wouldn't have believed it myself had I not seen it with my own eyes. A whole city of men, women and children were led into the forest, stripped naked and shot down in enormous graves. What happened there, let God above take note of and punish. The screams and cries could have cracked heaven. Wounded, I was able to push my way out of the grave. I hid for three days, naked, behind a grave stone, in a cemetery. Save yourselves, as soon as you can. Think of God, don't believe Germans."

The closest little town, Kurow, Markuszow, and others, the Jews had already been deported from those places and there weren't any more Jews there. The conflagration was coming closer all the time. The last days of Demblin were at hand. The brutes would roam around with fat batons in their hands and beat us. Everybody would come back from work bloodied and wounded. Shmuel Nachmias was carried back from work with his head nearly hacked off.

We had a little more trust in the Germans who would come regularly into our actual workshop, and we wanted to see if we could find something out about the

people who had already been deported. But we got the same answer from everybody, that they were sent to Austria to work. They said that they needed the Jews from Demblin here. The last words that the Jew wrote in his letter, that we should not believe the Germans, served as a warning for us. Our hearts were always looking with great terror at the moment that was approaching.

14

It was a lovely spring day the 6th of May, 1942. We'd just begun to eat breakfast at work, a little bit of black bread, when the door opened and one of our own who had to transport something to the Germans at the construction site came in and with great desperation said:

"We're lost. There's a deportation in the town."

"How do you know?", we asked him terrified.

"Trinishevskaya told me. She just came from the town."

Although the dark news wasn't unexpected, we nevertheless were plunged into confusion. Through the window we saw Trinishevskaya, an old Christian woman at whose hands we were always looking for some reason. Her little boy was also not any great sage. As soon as she came in and we hadn't even had a chance to ask her what was happening in the town, she burst out with a great cry and began to tell about it:

"Oye, Panovya, what's going on there, you won't believe it! There a lot of rail cars gathered together. The whole town is full of Gestapo and police. All the Jews are being driven into the market place. They're beating them, they're killing them, they're shooting from all sides. I just managed to get out of there alive myself. Oh God! Oh God!", she sobbed a few times. "Terrible things are happening there. Oye, Panovya", she said hurrying. "Forgive me, I must run back. I just came here to tell my son that he should stay away from work today. I need to have him at home."

She left quickly. We didn't know what to do. We sent somebody into the offices of the construction center to ask what we were to do. The supervisor, a young German acted as if the whole thing was just completely incomprehensible to him, not even happening, not even true. "Just yesterday", he said, "we got an order from the S.S., from Lublin to make the living quarters ready for a 1000 Jews." In this situation, he said he would immediately try to make contact by telephone with the commander's office. He told us to come back in 20 minutes.

We grabbed onto that answer, like somebody who was drowning would grab onto a sharp knife. But soon he communicated to us he wasn't able to make contact with the commander's office. Nobody was answering the telephone. "I'll try again. Come back in 15 minutes", he said. He said that three more times. Again we waited for another 15 minutes.

Finally we just tore out of there, ignoring the danger. I was imagining a burning city and I saw my child in the middle of the fire, I imagined my child looking for his mother, looking for his father, who should be taking care of him. "No, don't wait anymore I said to myself." I grabbed my coat and we all just went together into the town.

We could still hear a constant shooting in the town. When we came to the street where the post office was, it was empty. A little Polish boy who had been running by, shouted out:

"Vishedlaion Vas!" [POLISH WORD]

After stopping for a few minutes, the ghetto that we saw from the narrow street of the post office was a horrible site. All of the houses on both sides of Okulna street had their windows and doors smashed in, as well as the shutters on the windows. There wasn't a living soul in sight. From there we came to the old market place and saw how Hitler's devils in broad daylight carried out their barbaric work.

The whole Jewish population from Demblin and the surrounding towns, men and women, old and young, healthy and sick, had been early in the morning in the greatest confusion and stampede, under the threat of death, forced within a few minutes to leave their dwellings. Five in a row, packed together, they stood in the big pig market. Hundreds of murderers in various different kinds of uniforms milled around them, armed with rifles and automatics, as if on a slaughtering field. They used their whips on the Jews heads, on the heads of those who were barely able to stand on their feet.

A Jewish policeman spotted us and conducted us to the group of Jewish workers from the construction site who were standing along the side of the old Jewish houses, in a long line, almost as far as Okulna street. There were also families standing there, families of the Judenrat and of the Jewish police.

It seemed that some of the people had already gotten wind of what was going to happen because not all of the Jews were going to be sent away. Thousands of eyes looked at us with envy. A woman who wanted to run over to us and almost made it over to our side was overtaken by 2 policemen, who beat her mercilessly. Soon she fell. When she stood up again, she held her bloody face and didn't know where to go next.

Soon after that a policeman fell upon the Jew, Yitzhak Yamovitch. Apparently he was looking around for his wife and children whom he'd been separated from in the confusion of the stampede. The policeman beat him murderously on the face and head. He took all of the blows and didn't fall. The whole time he covered his face with his hands. He was badly beaten, but he managed to save his eyes.

Behind me, in the second line, Aleyazor Boyman stood. He continually sang a song of lament, "*Oye, Vay ez meyr*. I won't have a home to come back to."

"What happened?", I asked him.

He answered, "When I was standing at the threshold of my house, I had a little bit of nourishment. The Christians, before my eyes, ripped out the key from the door. When I tried to stop them, they threw me on the ground, stamped on me with their feet and the little bit of food that I had, they took. It wouldn't have been so bad if they weren't already people that I knew."

"What can I say?", the second Jew said. He was the son of Yidel Becks, who lived in the village of Bobrownik, near Demblin. He began to cry and to sob. "What did they do to you?", I asked him with some disdain. "How can you shame yourself like that, cry? You just watched how they almost beat a person to death and you didn't say a word then. Have a little bit of pride."

"Oh, God, I wish they really had killed me", the Jew didn't cease to cry. "Look at this." He showed his jacket which was spotted with blood. "Today, early in the morning some policemen came to us suddenly and herded up the different families that lived in the village. The old people they shot down on the spot. My father, an old man, was, poor thing, trembling with fear and just couldn't come out of the house he was so scared. I was able to lift him on my shoulders and carry him that way to the spot where everybody had to gather together. I began to run with all my strength. I heard the crack of a rifle and suddenly began to feel a warm stream cross my face and I saw blood. That was the blood of my dear father. They shot him on my shoulders", he cried.

I continually looked in the distance to the great mass of people which was swelling the four-sided pig market. Besides the murderers in military uniforms, from the distance, I couldn't recognize anybody. No matter how many people I asked around me about my own near and dear, nobody had the slightest idea. It was from the policeman who got close to us that I learned that my wife was in the same section that I was. He showed me where. I couldn't stay in my place after that. I tried to figure out how I was going to get over there. I wanted to at least say good-bye to her.

There were quite a few Germans milling around us who were taking in the bloody spectacle. Very carefully I got out of my line and like one of them, step

after step, so that I shouldn't make myself too obvious. Up and down the length of our row I walked and looked and that way I saw my wife and I went to her. She stood in one of the first rows. She had our child behind her shoulders, so that the child wouldn't be visible. I made my way next to her in the row. She told me that my mother and sister, Leah-Tema, were standing here as well, and that a policeman came and told my mother, "Come here old lady", and took her. My sister, with her little child, who she was carrying in her arms, also went with her mother. She told me also that she [his wife] had a little package of stuff for the child and that on the way to the round-up a little Christian boy had ripped it out of her hands.

15

We were standing near the highway, which traversed the town from the long main street. Across the street, right across from the administration building, through the market place, to the synagogue, we were standing face to face with the big mass of Jews who had been driven from the city. Only a few steps separated us from them. Fear of death looked out of their tired, terrified eyes. Each one knew that something even worse than what had happened until now, was coming. But, that they were all going to be driven into a gas chamber, where they'd be first suffocated and burnt, that was something that didn't occur to anybody.

For the last time I saw my Uncle Joseph here and Chubby Chaim. On the side, on the special free passage place, in front of David Minkas house, there was a big pile of bundles that people had tried to take along with them in the stampede but before they were allowed to carry these things into the market place, they had to throw them away into this pile. Not far from this big pile was the old, sick, pale and gray Leah Zisan. The sub-commander came to her and screamed:

"The devil with you, what do you think you're doing here?" He gestured with his hand to the big pile and mockingly said, "Oh, is all this stuff yours?"

The murderers around him had a good laugh from that.

"No sir", Leah with begging eyes looked up at him and answered. "I'm a poor, sick woman", she cried bitterly. "I can't stand up on my feet anymore. Just let me rest here. Let me stay here, I beg you."

"Good", the murderer said. "You can stay there." He called a policeman who had just taken an old Jew out of the row of people and said to him,

"The old lady is staying here."

He pointed at Leah. The policeman led the Jew back to his place. Then he took out his revolver and approached the old lady. Leah's eyes became twice as big with fear. When the policeman aimed at her, she couldn't hold back a scream. At that point she rose, but with both hands covering her face as one does when lighting the Sabbath candles. When the shot rang out in the air, she instantly threw both of her arms out and fell dead. A narrow, small stream of blood began to appear on her brow and soon her whole face was streaming blood. It was horrible to look at her face. Each there saw our own sorrowful end.

But there was even a greater threat to life. The worn out Jews since morning had been tormented with the greatest sadism. The barbarians ran around among the victims and began to sort them out. In order to torment people even more and intensify the hell, they played a few little devilish tricks, especially separating families. They used to take one from one row and then in a loud voice so that the others could hear, scream, "You stay here!". And then they'd take others from the same family into a second group. And since everybody wanted to save themselves, people began to run from one row to another. One just risked everything and ran from one row to another. And of course, that's just exactly what they'd expected. They surrounded those that were trying to get from one row to another and for a long time, with sticks, beat them over the head, until their victims wouldn't get up anymore.

At the same time that they took so many Jewish lives, they brought a Demblin Jew who had been lying in a hospital in Pulaw, after an operation that he'd had. They didn't forget him. They brought him on a peasant's wagon. His name was Leibela Kamashnmacher. The wagon circled the pig market and stopped near the big pile of packs where Leah, who'd been murdered, lay. The armed policeman who brought this man went to the little commander there and spoke to him for awhile. The whole time, Leibela with a pallid face and terrified eyes, did not stop looking at dead Leah who lay on the ground. The policeman went up and said something to the peasant who had driven the wagon. Leibela grabbed his head with both his hands. The peasant pulled on his reins and began traveling in the direction of the synagogue. The policeman followed behind with the rifle in his hand.

Suddenly a rain began to fall. Everything stopped. It was quiet for a moment. Though we heard a few shots from the direction of the ghetto, the rain didn't last very long, the sun came out again and began to shine.

The commander screamed, "Attention! If anybody here stops while they're walking you're going to be shot on the spot. I want you to conduct yourself with full military precision. Understand? March!"

The snake had imparted his poison. Four thousand tormented and beaten down souls, men and women, big and small, young and old, mothers with their little

babies in their arms, everybody, everybody, the whole city of Jews, were being marched alive to their own funeral. It was the last part of the journey to the shut up rail cars of death.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, the inspector from the work place, a tall, fat German, appeared as if from nowhere and with a raised hand gave a sign that we should stay where we were and not go any place. We were very attentive to that order and we stayed where we were and watched as in the distance our mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, wives and children, everybody, everybody, the Jews from our whole city, half dead and ringed out, barely managed to drag themselves on their feet. The length of both sides of the highway the armed devils walked. Everybody was driven out of the market place and it became empty.

"Forgive us", my sister-in-law Rivka said, pale as the wall, when she saw her parents go by. "Forgive us", she sobbed.

Everybody and everything was stuffed into the rail cars, poor and rich, the beautiful refined Jews together with the simple craftsmen and workers, storekeepers, porters, drivers, the whole sacred community which the Demblin Jews had created from generation to generation, for hundreds of years. The Jewish Demblin was gone, her Jewish light was extinguished.

In a matter of an hour Demblin became quiet as a graveyard. Only us, a few daughters and sons of Demblin's last murdered generation were allowed to stay by the barbarians, for their purposes, to serve them as slaves. They stood in the middle of the ruined city. When the fat work inspector allowed us to get out of there we first realized just exactly where we were. A deathly stillness reigned in the ghetto. Like crazy people we began to run around in the empty ghetto. We looked for relatives, perhaps somebody had been able to remain. And in the span of a few hours people who had big families were to be found just utterly bereft and alone, like a stone.

At my mother's house, where I had lived, I didn't find anybody at all. Everybody had gone. My mother, my two sisters with their children. Just one little boy who was 12 years old, who during the whole time of the deportation stood right next to my wife, remained. I just couldn't sit down in the house. And like everybody else I ran around and started asking, "Maybe one of my dear ones managed to remain." When I came to the house of my sister-in-law Rivka, I was stopped in my tracks, shaking like a leaf. Right near the house, in a big puddle of blood lay a Jew who'd been shot, my Uncle Joseph. A cold sweat covered me. I felt that my heart was going to break. "How can such a tragedy be?" I thought to myself. I'd just seen him among those who were leaving, in the first row with Chubby Chaim. When I bent over the dead body and really took a good look at it, I realized this was in fact the wagon driver, Shmuel Monishes.

Through the empty ghetto which had been purged of Jews, dark night fell. With a fearful sorrow and sense of terror, we couldn't find any rest at all in those emptied houses. We went and slept at other people's houses. After the terrible day we just couldn't even remain on our feet. The worn out and exhausted brain had not seized to think one thing only. Where did they take them? How many ghastly sufferings did they have to endure in those shut up rail cars? A feeling of terrible guilt began to assail me. I thought of my mother's deportation. I just wasn't able to enter that empty house again.

Just as soon as I lay down, a deep, deep sleep overtook me. A terrible cry woke me up. That was the cry of Yisrael Tsetzikover. He had sent one of the rail workers to check out what was going on in the station. The worker came back and told him the whole night they kept the victims under an open sky, and only just before dawn did they drive them into the rail cars, and take them away. Yisrael was resigned alone, went over the streets without any purpose, only mourned with a howling his wife and children.

Outside it was very early in the morning. In the gray sky there still wasn't the slightest sign of the sunrise. The only people who remained were those who were unrecognizable, as if they had completely changed at night. It was still early when we went to work. It wasn't possible to remain inside. I wanted to go to my brother's, who lived in the old part of the town. Maybe I could learn something there about what was going on. On the way, I ran into Moshe Mordechai Molaver's house. He was a tailor and I worked with him. As soon as I crossed the threshold I stopped in my tracks. It wasn't the same house as it was the day before. The window was open, the beds and the cabinets were turned over, thrown all over the whole place, clothes all over the ground. In the middle of the house Moshe Mordechai stood by a wash basin and washed clothes which his wife had not had a chance to finish.

I regretted having come in, but it was too late. Moshe Mordechai saw me and said, "You're looking at my tragedy, you see what's happened to my beautiful house? How can I tell you what's happened here?!" (He pointed to his own heart), "I was a father for 17 years. Just yesterday I had a wife and 3 children, today everything is gone. Wife gone, children gone. I'm alone. I'm alone and empty, dark, just one bloody heart remaining. Yeah, look." He suddenly pulled out a little kid's shirt from the wash basin, crumpled it up and with both hands, waved it in the air and then spread it out before my eyes and held it there. "You see," he said to me, "that belonged to my Meiral. I made it for his birthday. Maybe he wore it twice."

For a long time he stood there, unmoving, with his lips pale, pressed together, the light gone out of his eyes. And he looked at the little shirt.

"*Vey es mier* [Woe is me]", he said suddenly, spasmodically and in a heart rending way, threw himself on the bed. He lay there with his face in the cushion and he wailed, "Oh my great, great loss. My great, great sorrow."

The whole way that I went back, the whole time, his terrible weeping accompanied me. From every open window it seemed that I heard Moshe Mordechai's weeping and moaning.

17

The whole nightmare of the deportation had already been played out before our eyes, and now we were afraid of new, more terrible actions. It was around mid day when the lovely automobile of the building, the man who owned the construction site, drove into the courtyard. The chauffeur, who was an old Pole, quickly came into us. He very carefully looked around and said, "Panovya, the Jews from Ryki are being deported now. It looks like they're going to drive them through Demblin, to the train." I saw this happening and I watched them being driven through the forest of Ryki.

We remained there as if we'd been turned into stone at our places. When we came to ourselves a little bit, we couldn't understand why hadn't they just taken the Jews to the train station at Ryki which was actually closer by 10 kilometers? Then it occurred to us: a very horrible realization that they want to maybe throw in the leftovers from Demblin and drive them together with the Jews of Ryki to the train.

I didn't want to make the same mistakes as I did at the first deportation and I immediately went into the town to my wife and child. The whole way I ran quickly, I could hardly breath. When I got close to the fields I suddenly heard shooting. Instinctively I stopped in order to better hear. But it quickly became quiet again. It seemed that due to my terrified state of mind it was a fantasy, and I realized that this was just a product of my state of mind. I went further. I was just trying to get to town as quickly as I could. I was almost at the gate when I heard some more shooting, but this time it was very loud. Unmistakable. It was very close.

The German, who controlled the permits, wasn't hurrying. At the gate beside me, there were other Poles with their permits. I wanted to avoid them but they saw me. When we found ourselves on the other side of the gate, one of them said to me mockingly, "They're driving your little Jews out of Ryki, they're uprooting everybody", he said in a biting way.

"You're happy?", a second Pole said to him. "Just wait, just wait, the war isn't over yet. When they finish off the Jews, they're going to start in on us. Don't worry, these rats aren't going to forget us either."

I didn't listen anymore to what they were talking about, but kept running on further.

The shots were more frequent now, and louder. In the city I arrived at almost the same moment when the transport of Jews from Ryki came in. When I crossed the highway to the other side of the market place I saw them from the distance. I couldn't go further, I was stopped by a group of Jews who were working cleaning up the ruins of the houses that had been burned, covered with dust from the road, with dark faces from which a look of fear of death emanated. All of the Jews from Ryki, men, women, and children had been running with their last strength. The police were on both sides of the highway and were watching them. They were continually shooting their rifles, aiming at old people and those who carried their little children in their arms.

In a matter of a few minutes the whole road was covered with dead bodies. The murderers not only ordered people to run, but they also ordered them to sing. It's impossible to describe the horrible picture of crying, gasping people singing. Thousands of them, thousands of worn out Jews. The deportation of Ryki froze the blood in your veins with its sadism. On peasants' wagons, the bodies of many men, women and children lay, with their arms and legs and heads hanging over.

The horrible, hellish fleeing suddenly stopped. I saw that I dare not remain at that place and got away quickly. There was a deathly quiet reigning in the ghetto. You didn't see any living soul, as if everybody in the last minute tried to save themselves somehow, tried to run away.

Desperate, I remained near my house. There was a sign on the door which had been shut. There wasn't anybody inside. I went to the old part of town and there found my wife with my child, at my sister-in-laws. They were just about crazy with terror. Everywhere they tried to hide felt like it wasn't safe enough. More than once we ran from one place to another, to the outhouses, into the fields, among the trees, trying to hide ourselves. In order that they wouldn't find us or notice us, we lay spread out on the ground. At the sight of anybody, we became terrified. We envied the horse who was in the pasture feeding on the grass. Each minute was an eternity for us. Only then when we first saw the first two Jews arrive from the city, did we raise our heads from the grass. The Jews of Ryki were no longer in the town. The murderers had driven them to the train. Only a few hundred Jews were left over for slave labor.

In the morning along the length of the highway, from the city to the train, they picked up 300 corpses and buried them in the Demblin cemetery.

It was the fourth day after the deportation. For all of our efforts to ascertain what had happened to those who had been taken away, we were able to come up with nothing certain. We even paid for some kind of news about them, but those we paid just took advantage of us and fooled us. A Pole told us that he'd followed the train with the Jews until it went over the other side of the border. From the Germans who came into the work place we weren't able to find out anything either.

Day and night the enormous sword of extermination hung over our heads. We didn't stop thinking for a minute about how to save our own children. My brother Meir turned to his Polish friends and acquaintances. He wanted to give them everything he owned, if they'd just hide one of his children. But none of them agreed. Everybody was terrified. They began talking again about having us stay the whole time in the camp. That meant that we wouldn't be able to know what was going on with our families. It was a terrible prospect.

Meir suggested that we turn to the man who ran the construction site in order to get employment here for our wives. If he let us do that then we'd try to get our children in too. As it turned out, the tailors sewed an outfit for the man who owned the construction site, his name was Tila. We prepared this outfit for him and sent my brother Meir to him to take measurements and to have a little talk with him about our wives. He came back quite soon and from his happy expression we made out that he had something good to tell us. It didn't come easy. At first the business didn't want to permit it. The construction chief, a simple German, couldn't understand what kind of employment there would be for women in heavy construction work. It was only when Meir was able to explain to him that in the kitchen, washing the floors and the barracks and other kind of work like that, that women could do that a lot better than the men could. Then he agreed and gave the order that the women could come in.

When Meir had finished talking to him about one matter, he decided to start in on him about bringing our children into the camp. When he heard about that he said to my brother, "Yeah, I understand. But how are we going to do that? The S.S. provides just enough food for those people who are able to work. Where are we going to find something to eat for the kids?"

My brother saw that this guy was at least with him in theory, he began to talk to his conscious, "You're a father, you'd understand what a father has to go through in this kind of situation. Don't worry, we'll just share what we have to eat with our children."

"OK. Good. You can bring the children into the camp. We got plenty of room here. It's not really going to derail things. We've got a 1,000 people already, what's the big deal if we have 5 kids?"

It's possible, that at that moment, the simple German decided the fate and the life of a hundred children, because a couple of months later, the same German, when the city was completely liquidated, allowed the parents to take their children into the camp.

After that he himself came into the workshop and said to us that he would make ready the camp and would tell Venkart to prepare a special kitchen for the children and tell him to cook a better kind of soup for them. It didn't take long when we saw Venkart through the window. He came to us quickly. His fat face and long red nose had a very angry look. He came to us and didn't even say his usual, "Good morning gentlemen", and started to scream immediately, "My God, you, in your stupid way, ruined my whole plan".

We looked at him terrified, we didn't understand what he meant. But before we had a chance to ask him anything, he pulled out of his briefcase a bent paper and said, "Look what a crime you committed here. Here I have a list of women that I wanted to take into the construction site and because of your wives who are going to be employed here, everything is going to be impossible. Now they won't even hear about having those other people come in."

He went out and slammed the door in anger.

19

How terrible was our condition, that we begged to stay in a concentration camp. After Venkart left, our uneasiness grew. The next morning our wives got the order through the Judenrat to come to work at the construction site. They came into the camp with the children.

We had a corner of the big wooden barracks, and there lived a few hundred residents of the camp, cut off with this wall and a little window near the ceiling. Around the walls were double wooden bunks, one on top of the other. There we made a separate entryway for us. And all of the tailors and shoemakers lived together there with their children, all cramped in together.

In an early part of the day, when we went from work to the midday meal in the camp, we saw through the barbed wire my brother's little boy, the youngest resident of the camp, a 3 year old, he sat in the sand and played. Just then, together with us, Venkart came into the camp with a German under officer, Katinger, who lived with us on the other side of the gate in order to keep watch

over us day and night. He had a big black dog, Lumpy, who he always used to walk around with. As soon as he started beating one of the camp inmates with his whip or with his revolver, the dog, with great eagerness would throw himself on the victim and sink his teeth into his unfortunate body.

Venkart walked out of a barrack with the German officer and as soon as Venkart saw the kid playing around in the sand, he screamed in his hoarse voice, "Idiots. What do you think a kid is doing outside here? Why don't you keep him inside in the barracks?"

My brother understood that he was screaming because he wanted to get some revenge on us because we were able to arrange these things, of getting our children in here, without even asking him for any help. He asked him where he got an order that a child had to stay inside all day long, inside the dark stuffy barracks without any air? "Is it forbidden?" he asked him, "for a little child to spend a few moments in the courtyard out there?"

Venkart's face became red with anger and he screamed in the direction of the under officer, "Shape things up here, the kids shouldn't be found outside."

Among the couple of hundred people who were employed in agriculture in the fields, most of them being women and children, my sister's child, Pinchas, also worked. He was almost just a little child himself, he was very thin, he'd been through a lot, he was just 12 years old. After the deportation he remained alone, without his parents. He did hard work. I had a bad premonition about him. I was really scared and I decided never to go to work until he'd already gone so I could keep an eye on him.

There had never been as there was at this time as many people at the Judenrat, every morning early. A big demanding crowd. Everybody, even the sickest people with swollen feet were standing around asking to be sent to work with tears in their eyes. They begged the police, take pity on them and take them to work. The Jewish police, who were reading from the list that had already been prepared, read out the names of people who had to go to work. They couldn't give any advice to people who weren't on that list.

"We want to go as a group", those who had not been chosen, screamed. The police heard that and with a lot of arrogance said:

"Yeah, you'd really like to see that, you dog. Try that and you'll never go to work again", he screamed to the person who had protested.

Every time that somebody from the Judenrat itself, one of the people working there, showed themselves for an instance through the open door, they would just peek out and withdraw immediately. One after another the slaves standing around

were taken off to one job or another and the hell in the courtyard where people were waiting became smaller. The few Germans who used to come early in the morning to take the people to work, knew exactly and understood what was going on. With a little smile and a wink to each other, as if to say: "Look how the Jews here are just dying to get to work."

I saw that Pinchas remained. Although I hated to beg I went to the policeman and began to speak to his conscious.

"I can't help", he answered me. "I get a list and I can't change it. Go to him, he's the one who has the final say so." And he waved in the direction of one of the people at the Judenrat.

Although the chances were very slim, especially with this individual, I had to approach, who was upset and wasn't in a good mood and was a real wretch to start with. I didn't have a choice, because the last group was being prepared to go. I went to him and I began to talk very carefully. From his angry expression with which he measured me, I immediately understood my failure. He really began to scream. "Don't bother me!", and turned around and went out. But I tried to talk to him again, maybe he would listen to me this time. As soon as I began to say another word to him I felt his fist in my face with such force that I fell down. At that point I couldn't control myself anymore. Too often had I been driven over the edge the last couple of days. I grabbed Pinchas' little pail with a few potatoes which had been prepared for him to take to work and I smashed the guy over his face and head. Everybody started running over there. Police separated us.

"What's that guy's name?", the Judenrat person screamed.

He had not anticipated the kind of chutzpah that I showed, especially in a moment when Jewish life was so cheap.

"Wait, wait!", he screamed at me. "I want you to know you're going to have to remember me." All riled up he went back into the Judenrat office.

"I don't envy you", the policeman said to me. "I'm afraid that he's going to send you into the punishment camp."

As I learned later, he couldn't do anything to me because of the fact I was employed at the construction site. A double miracle happened at that point because a few minutes later when the tumult died down, the biggest barbarian of the police came into the Judenrat. He used to always go around with his whip in hand accompanied by a big, wild wolfhound, who at the least wink of his master would throw himself on his victim.

The ghetto became more barren and more empty. The Jews who worked at the construction site were put up there. They began to live there. Only on Sundays, after work, in the afternoon hours with a special pass, were they able to spend a short time at home and take a look at that little bit of poverty they still had, but they had to come back into the camp very shortly.

Only us tailors and shoemakers were an exception because we had to use various accessories and materials for our work. We continued to receive monthly passes and we were able to go into the city that way.

Every day in that period we would see strange, unfamiliar people in the morning who had come into the Demblin ghetto during the night. Our sorrow was very great. It was so great that we couldn't even really look at these people as we passed them, we didn't even ask them where they came from because what was the use of asking? We already knew the story. We knew this person, stranger that he was, immediately. His pale sorrowful face was familiar, the hopelessness and terror in his gaze, the result of having to conduct a desperate struggle for survival every hour of the day, in fact, every minute of his life. That look of fear showed that these people had run from the hands of murderers during deportation or had escaped from a sealed rail car and jumped out onto the road.

One morning on the road I came upon such a person, an old Jewish woman. People were walking by to work and she just stood there by the highway which led to the slaughterhouse, with both hands on a little wooden fence in front of a peasant's hut, just along the side of the road there. She was barely able to stand on her feet. She told me of her big family, sons and daughters, even great grandchildren, not one was alive anymore. She'd heard that in Demblin there were still Jews and with her last strength she'd wandered at night through forests and fields and barely alive had made it here. Later when she got here she saw the same kind of tragedy that she had seen everywhere else. She didn't have any place to go and that's the way she stood there, all alone, resigned, just staring at the world, not knowing what to do with herself next.

If you exclude the kind of brutality that we already were quite familiar with, with the Nazis, even knowing all of that, it still was very hard for us to believe that they would simply take a whole city of men, women and children away with the purpose of simply killing them. It was still hard for us to get that through our heads. There was just a spark of hope that still flickered in our hearts until one day when even that little spark was extinguished. A Christian brought a letter to one of the people who was with us in the camp from his cousin in another city and the letter read, "My most unfortunate brothers and sisters of Demblin, light candles and say Kaddish for your families, who the Germans took away on the 6th of May from your city. Not one of them is alive. Believe me, I wish that I wasn't

so sure of all of this. Believe me, I wish that I had the slightest doubt about their fate. Had I such a doubt I wouldn't write you this bitter news."

And so, our surprise was very great, when on the 9th day after the deportation, we heard that the Germans brought into town a couple of thousand Jews from Czechoslovakia. We saw a good sign in this fact that they were bringing people in. We began to hope that maybe the same thing happened with our loved ones, maybe they just took them from one place and sent them to another. We breathed a little bit lighter. I just couldn't stay at my work place. I was just very anxious and very restless and curious and my curiosity to see these Jews from Czeckia was intense. Maybe through them I could learn something about the fate of the Polish Jews. I immediately went into town.

The whole empty square by the burned down synagogue, from the spot where the town pump was all the way down to the meadow, was fully packed with Jews. We hadn't seen Jews like this in Demblin for a good, long time. Those who arrived were spotlessly dressed and clean, looked quite healthy, freshly shaven, in beautiful sports coats and shoes of various colors and with high boots all the way up to their knees. Among them was a high chatter and in various languages, in Czeck, in Hungarian, in German, and in Yiddish. A big part of these people were dressed in an orthodox fashion. The children had rosy cheeks (blood and milk) full of Jewish charm, rosy, red round cheeks and black eyes. The little boys with round hats and long wide payes. You could see right away that these people had left substantial possessions behind in the homes that they left. They brought with them quite a bit of food, the best sausages and frankfurters, stuff that we hadn't seen for a very long time, and all kinds of different preserves in boxes. The Germans gave them special rail cars to travel in, so that they could take all their stuff with them. They even took the little children's play wagons.

Right in the front of this mass of people there stood 2 elderly Jews who spoke. One of them tall and slender, a second one, a very short old man. They stood there and spoke in a very refined way, with a very dignified stature in long silk coats with wide brimmed hats. They really attracted my attention. I understood that these people were Rabbis. But one thing was hard for me to understand about the scene and that is that their faces were shaven, just as the other men's faces. I went over to them, very boldly I thought, and asked if the Germans hadn't made them shave their beards off or shave them off themselves.

"What? You doubt it?", the old man with a sense of a wounded tone asked me the question back. And his wise eyes cheerfully settled on me. And as if he would emphasize this he laid his trembling fingers on his chin and said, "Look, look what they've done to me."

"You see Rabbi", the younger one said to the older one, "what we've already had to live through? People are actually suspicious that we ourselves actually shaved

our beards off. But the Lord above should have had some pity by now on His Jews", he concluded sorrowfully.

"Don't take it so hard", the old man comforted. "Things will get back the way they should again and God will help within half a year and once again we'll have our beautiful beards back."

That was the first and last time that I saw the elderly Rabbi of Preshov. I did see the younger man once again, a couple of months later, in the early evening. By then it was extremely difficult to even recognize him. He was extremely thin and dressed in just a short jacket from which his long thin arms hung out, all the way up to the elbows. On his head he wore a big Polish hat which fell down over his ears. He ran from one courtyard to another avoiding the Gendarmes who at that moment were making their rounds through the ghetto and woe to the one who was unfortunate enough to be found in their way. Although we weren't able to find out anything about Polish Jews from the Jews from Preshov, they hadn't seen anything, they hadn't heard anything, they certainly didn't know anything about Polish Jews being sent to Czeckia, we still held out some hope that somewhere our deported ones were still alive.

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Meanwhile the ghetto came back to life. The Judenrat was occupied with settling in the Jews from Preshov into the apartments. They had not suffered as much yet from the German murderers and didn't anticipate what they were about to encounter. When they had to go into the muddy courtyard and the small narrow half sunken little outhouse, full of excrement, there was really quite a tragic, comic scene. The women didn't want to go in there and they complained that the Germans had promised them that the place to which they were going to travel, they would find everything they needed there, all the conveniences. Now they were complaining to their men as if they'd all come here just of their own free will. The men comforted them that the War would be over pretty soon, maybe another 5 or 6 months and then with God's help they would just travel back home.

In the ghetto it became very crowded once again. Two or three families were pushed together into one little house with only a little bit of air to breath and the scarcity grew.

The Jews from Preshov worked very hard where they manufactured iron rail ties at the Shultz company. The women and children from age 12 on, worked in the fields. For the slightest infraction at these jobs people would get beaten hard and often, and sometimes shot. After a very hard day of work, sometimes the whole 24 hours, the slaves had to go back to the ghetto singing. These people in just a short amount of time had changed so dramatically that it was really hard to

recognize them at all. In the early part of the time they were there, the Jews from Preshov sold off the different frankfurters and sausages and conserves, exchanged them for bread and potatoes. They also, as long as the Germans permitted, received money and letters from their friends in Czeckia. When they first arrived, the Gendarmes stayed away from the ghetto. They seized the practice temporarily of just dragging people to forced labor. This went on just long enough for the letters from the Jews of Preshov to arrive in Czeckia and spread the good news that they were alive and well and living in Poland. But then everything changed suddenly. The Gendarmes who had busied themselves elsewhere came back again and the hell that we were familiar with resumed.

One Sunday, this is after returning to the ghetto from the murderers, I and my younger brother Yidel, came into the ghetto. The streets were bare and empty. People were terrified of the Gendarmes, who were with great completeness carrying out their point of brutality. We made our way through the courtyards.

When we came into our mother's house where Jews from Preshov were living, I encountered Mrs. Cohn, a tall, thin woman who was lying in bed. She had 8 children. Her pale long face was blue. I asked her what happened. With a very weak voice she said:

"Two days ago a Jewish policeman came here and my daughter, who'd just returned from work, was asked to come right back from work. I begged the man to let her stop for a moment to have a little something to eat. He became furious. He began to scream. 'What do you want? You want me to put my head on the chopping block for you?' With a big fat stick that he had in his hand, he began to beat me with blows that were so heavy I immediately fell to the ground and until today I can't get up."

The barrenness in the ghetto really terrified us. As we returned to our camp even earlier than we'd planned, when we came to the gate of the ghetto and wanted to go out, we were trembling. We suddenly heard a heart rending cry coming from a courtyard as if they were tearing someone piece by piece of their living flesh. We ran there to see the horrible picture. With his back to a wall, Leibel Deitcher's son-in-law stood with blood pouring down his face, between 2 gendarmes who on both sides had him cornered and were pushing in and with bayonets, hacking at him over the head. With his last strength he begged them: "Sirs, my dear sirs, don't you see I'm already dead."

"Shut up, don't scream", the sadists screamed at him and hacked at him some more. "Today we need a whole lot more pigs like you to kill."

When the victim fell from his feet, like a tree that had been chopped down, only then did they leave him be and went looking for another victim. That day they killed 9 Jews in that way.

The next Sunday I went into the ghetto again. As I passed through the train tracks I saw the Preshover Jews for the first time at work. With legs spread out in tall black boots, the German Rudolf stood, the most notorious murderer and brute of the Shultz company. In the middle of the Vexel train line, the thin, ragged Jews from Preshov carried rails from one spot to another. Rudolf stood with a long whip in his hand with an angry face and roared like a beast, the whip was always held in the air over the heads of the worn out slaves, a number of whom already showed the signs on their faces and heads of being hit and the signs were bloody. Every time that another person fell to the ground from his blows, that person would get up immediately and go back to work.

A certain early evening we saw thick smoke in the direction of the air base. Something there was burning. In the morning when we came to work, we realized that a barrack with asbestos had burned. We didn't take special note of this and forgot the whole thing. But, 8 days later, on a Sunday, when everybody was standing in a line to get a little bit of thin soup, we heard the police call out, "March in here!". And everybody had to leave behind their bowl of food and hurry into the place where people had to line up. The police were already waiting there and they drove people on and beat them with sticks on the head. When everybody was lined up there, the murderers began to walk between the rows, looked everybody over very carefully as if they were looking for something. They would look right through you with their murderous eyes so that your heart would just about stop beating with terror. After standing there for a long time, we were barely able to stand on our feet, they took out a list and called out 7 men who had worked in the barrack that had been burned down on the day of the blaze. And then the murderers took them someplace else. Later people said they took them into the forest at Ryki and shot them.

A couple months had gone by and we just weren't able to find out what had happened to the Jews of Demblin who had been taken away. Sometimes people did say that Shlomo Beitzman's son who was taken away with his family during the deportation managed to find his way back later on to the camp and told how they had murdered all of the Jews from Demblin. And he told how he himself had buried his father with his own hands. Soon after that the boy disappeared.

A second time, on another occasion, we were able to stop the Poles and talk to them on the other side of the barbed wire, where one of the assistant officers, Katinger, lived. I was able to talk to one of these Poles and I asked him what people were saying in the area, maybe somebody knew something about the Jews who had been deported. He answered me that they were saying they took the

Jews out to a special place in the forest and there they shot them and burned them. And they wouldn't let anybody get near that particular place where that was done. Day and night you could smell even in the distance the odor of burning human flesh. We weren't able to believe it, even in a time of such savagery, that they were actually capable of burning men, women and children. We thought that the Poles were just making this up in order to hurt us and just increase our suffering. But, be that as it was, we still took those kind of stories to heart.

The High Holidays were approaching. The days were becoming shorter and the heart was becoming more sorrowful. We were drawn into going into the town. I got my pass and I started walking in that direction. I hadn't gone half way though when somebody met me who was coming from the town and was running fast away from it. Not even bothering to stop, he screamed at me:

"Go back, go back, there's a deportation going on now in town." And he pointed to the train line where a train with boarded over little windows was very slowly moving and pushed by a locomotive to the train station. I turned around fast and went back to the camp.

There, there was a great confusion and tumult. Everybody new about the deportation. The gate of the camp was quickly shut because the orders were not to let anyone in. And people stood there, just inside the gate, terrified, and waited for news. Those who still had relatives in the town or at other work places, rung their hands and cried.

A rumor began to spread quickly in the camp that the Jews from several of the work places were going to be sent away. A young man, Paviyanetzer, who had worked for a German, appealed to the German that he worked for to bring his father and brother who found themselves by accident in town during the deportation, back to the camp. He kept pacing back and forth in front of the gate looking for them. When at last he saw a young German soldier leading both his brother and father to the gate, he raised his two hands and his beautiful black tear filled eyes piously to heaven and very loudly thanked God for the great mercy of what he had done. After that he fell on his father's neck and cried like a little kid. Afterwards he remembered the soldier who had brought them back and he thanked him. The soldier said to the father as if he was answering him, "Believe me, I haven't shot any Jews during this deportation."

Although at that moment the words of the German were beyond my understanding, they fell on my heart like heavy stones. No more people came from the city.

The whole day our nerves were strung out. The hell was continuing. Each minute we looked at the highway with terror, wondering if they were going to come and take us as well. We didn't know anything about what was going on in the city or

if they'd already taken the Jews from there away. Just before night, when the sun began to go down, we began to hear along the whole length of the road that led from the town to the train station, a distance of about 2 kilometers, a continuous shooting from rifles. We understood that now they were taking the Jews to the train. Those who didn't have their relatives with them there in the camp wailed and moaned very loudly.

Afterwards, a few people came running to the camp and with great terror told that they'd taken people away from their work places. The panic grew. We were afraid that they'd take people out of our camp as well. That was the most horrible and terrifying moment. Something that is absolutely impossible to convey. That moment of danger, where you hang between life and death.

A few times I went back into a part of the barracks where we were living, but then, as if I was anticipating something was going to happen, I went back to the gate. It already had been night for quite awhile. At the gate weeping people stood. Each one thought that they'd gotten everybody and that the deportation was over. Suddenly though, from the distance, we saw in the dark the very thing that we'd been frightened of the whole day. Two S.S. men drove up to the gate of the camp.

"Where are the police?", one of them asked.

"Here", answered the Jewish policeman who was standing at the gate.

"What?", the S.S. man asked him. "Why aren't there any German police here?". Not waiting for an answer they turned around and with the same speed traveled back in the other direction.

D. Meir, a Jew from Vienna, Herman Venkart's assistant, in his desperation, smacked his hands together and screamed at those who were standing around near him, "My God, you're making such a mess out of everything. Get away from the gate."

At that moment I saw a whole squad of military men marching from the highway to the camp. I ducked into the living quarters where everybody was. The woman and children, everybody who was in there, came out and stood at the fence and they were able to with their hands dismantle part of the barbed wire, and one after another people pushed their way through and began running into the field in the direction of the construction site. Quiet from terror, in the courtyard of the Germans, we one after the other huddled up against the walls until we came to the work place where we worked during the day. Very quietly, so that the Germans shouldn't hear us, we opened the door, went inside, we all lay down packed together in one heap, the women and children in a corner.

Suddenly I remembered that in the stampede and the hurry we forgot little Pinchas and left him behind in the camp. I went back in and managed to find him and lead him out.

When I returned with him, the big bright electric lights of the big mess hall where the Germans ate were pouring out of the windows. They lit up the courtyard which had previously been dark. I looked inside and saw that the Germans were eating very quietly and peacefully as if nothing had happened. At the tables with the clean white table cloths sat about 15 savages eating their evening meal.

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We sat in the dark and knew exactly what kind of terrible end awaited us if all the people in the camp were to be deported. Even the children, just like the adults, felt the enormous danger and silently, as if they wanted some kind of shelter, huddled up against their parents. That was without a doubt one of the most terrifying moments. Each one of us felt the sword hanging over our heads. And just in the utter apparent indifference of the Germans we saw the worst kind of sign. "Aren't they even interested that all of the Jews in the camp are going to be taken away? Maybe they don't even know about it yet and we should tell them", somebody offered from the desperate quiet that enveloped us.

We immediately began to think that over and we sent Meir to the Germans. I went with him just until he actually went into the kitchen and shut the door behind him. I stood at a distance and waited with my heart beating. I looked in through a window.

It didn't take very long before one of the young Polish girls in a white apron came in from the kitchen went to the first German who was sitting by the door, bent over him and said something to him. The German stood up immediately, walked over to the man who owned the construction company and began to speak with him. All the Germans listened in to what they were talking about with great attention.

Everything, everything, even the pictures on the walls of the Fuhrer, of the Third Reich, made a deep impression on my eyes. And like a very well performed play in the theater, where everybody played their roles very smoothly with great poise, how could reality, such a murderous, cold blooded reality, when one knew about it, when it was not very far away, exist only a few steps away, when hundreds of people were desperately trying to scratch their way out of death?!

Just then, when they stopped eating, the first one to rise was the leader of the construction operation, and after him the other ones filed out of the hall. The light was turned off and in the courtyard it became dark again. The Germans began to

walk in the direction of the camp. I didn't know exactly where to be at that point and I returned to the courtyard and from there back to the barracks. There wasn't any point any more in staying there and so everybody went back into the camp.

One after another of us crept through the barbed wire into the camp. Inside it was dark and quiet. We didn't see anybody. From the black wooden barracks with the well disguised covered over windows, not a single ray of light escaped. Totally worn out from the terrifying day we fell down on our hard wooden bunks and went to sleep.

That night, when we woke up in the early morning we saw our new loss. In the camp were missing a couple hundred workers who were employed where they dealt with the coal. "Only healthy and strong men do we need here", the murderers in the last moment had lied to their victims. Just one woman who hadn't wished to be separated from her husband was allowed to go with him. Also the young man from Paviantzer, the one who had the old father, who had thanked God for bringing back his father from the ghetto, wasn't there any longer either.

In just a few hours we had become even more orphaned and the despair had increased greatly. People from the town came and told us that all of the Jews had been sent away except for the Judenrat and the Jewish police. Many people were now standing at the gate and begging to be let into the camp. In the city hundreds of corpses remained and there wasn't anybody to bury them.

25

More than usual I was drawn into going to the town to see with my own eyes the enormous crimes that the Germans had committed. In a dead, finished city I arrived. Fear presided over the bright day and terror emanated from the deadly quiet, from the abandoned houses, from the locked doors and shutters. I wandered around looking, hoping to come up with something, fruitlessly. But besides the corpses that lay everywhere in the market place, I didn't see a living soul. I didn't even see a policeman. I made my way to Okulna street where the city pump was. On the other side of the highway, I saw the open door of a Jewish establishment. This had been where Moshe Kamin, who conducted the work office at the Judenrat, had a little restaurant there once upon a time. I went inside and at a little table near the entrance there sat some young people with pale faces, half asleep. I wanted to go out again and one of them asked me suddenly:

"Tell me, have you been to the ghetto yet?"

"No. I'm going now", I answered him.

"If you're going now then take a sip of this before you go", and he pointed at a flask. "Without this it's not possible to live today. Take a drink, it will make it easier for you to die, because that's what is going to happen to you."

With a fearful presentiment and sorrow for the terrible things that awaited us I made my way, one of the most unfortunate victims of our awesome terrible fate and I went to see the terrible end, the brutal destruction and extermination of our Jews. Wherever my feet took me and wherever my eyes reached in the courtyards, in the streets, in the fields that surrounded, I saw puddles of blood that hadn't dried and in them murdered Jews. In some places whole families lay one on top of the other. Some of the courtyards it wasn't even possible to make your way through. I had to constantly jump over dead bodies and over puddles of blood.

The whole city seemed like a slaughterhouse. Suddenly out of this funereal silence, the silence of the graveyard, I heard a great lament from right out of the grave. When I came to the place I saw a sister and a brother, both young people, pale as the wall, who were barely able to stand on their feet. In order not to fall, they leaned on one another. They cried bitterly and wept for the young woman who was laid out on the ground, her face covered with a rag. The mild gentle wind was constantly playing with her gold blond hair under the rag as if the wind wanted to show the crime of this young life which had been cut off, wanted to show that to everybody.

When I left that place it didn't take long before the weeping stopped and again a deathly quiet as before.

The burned out synagogue had an especially frightful appearance. Here there were whole piles of corpses, one on top of the other. It was to this place that the sadists had led their victims en masse in order to show them before they killed them what kind of a horrible death they were about to have. They forced the half dead, the worn out, to crawl on top of the pile of the dead and shot them there and from here, as I was told, one heard screams and cries of those who were being done in.

I didn't realize that I stood there as long as I did. As if I would turn to stone there by the giant pile of bodies with their bloodied heads and their feet and arms sticking out. It was only when a big group of huge black birds flew over my head that I shuddered and roused myself from my sorrowful dark thoughts. I saw that the sun had already gone down. It was the beginning of Autumn, the days were becoming shorter. It was the time of the High Holidays. Night fell quickly over the murdered ghetto and everywhere around, darkness, sorrowful darkness, spread. Terror overcame me, with quick steps I made my way back to the camp.

When I was not far from the burned out synagogue, near two little mountains of garbage, a terrified black dog sprang out of them and began to run very quickly but soon the dog stopped and looked back at the place that he'd been running from. I understood that the dog had something there and he really didn't want to leave. When I went closer I saw that there was a murdered man there, his head had been smashed in. I began to throw a stone at the dog. He took off quickly, but he stopped again soon, as if he knew that neither he nor I dare to be found in the city, that both of us needed to be afraid of being here. He began to bark at me, angrily, so that the whole city heard, and I saw that I didn't dare remain there. The dog was able to get what he wanted and I went back, the corpses lay there for the dogs and the crows. They lay there in death, defenseless just like they were while they lived before the German beasts.

26

In the morning I got my little boy, Itchela, who was with me in the camp, and I went with him into the city. The child should see with his own eyes the great bestial crimes of the German brutes. "Maybe he'll be able to outlive this horrible War", I thought to myself. "And he should be able to tell the world about this most huge and incomprehensible barbarism in the 20th century that the cultured and civilized German people carried out for years before the eyes of the whole world."

In the city nothing had changed as the day before, the same horrifying scene and the quiet that went with it. Even the Poles after the shooting of the day before were afraid to go into town. Just today the Judenrat received orders to clean out the dead quickly so that disease wouldn't spread. Two young people, one from Warsaw, Sevek, and the other one, Brochal Sherman's son, practically still a child, were the only ones to be found in emptied out Demblin. They were driving around now in a wagon with two big iron wheels. From the courtyards, from the streets, from the surrounding fields, they'd gathered up all the dead and taken them to Akeyvala Maneysha's big garage. Whenever one of them would see among the corpses somebody that they knew, he'd yell out to the other one, "Look who I found. Look who's lying over here."

When I looked into the garage, it was overflowing with the dead, who lay in rows, one on top of the other. Outside near the garage there were big piles of documents and photographs. More than 500 dead had been gathered up in the first days after the deportation in Demblin. They buried them all in some big mass graves at the cemetery.

A few days later they discovered still more people who'd been shot, who they hadn't known about before. They found them in the houses and in other places where they'd been trying to save themselves. Whole families were found shot.

After the deportation,, nothing changed in the town. One rarely saw a Jew. There wasn't any talking, because a Jew wasn't allowed to be there at all. The murderers didn't bring anymore Jews into the town from other localities.

Not withstanding the facts and appearance of Demblin's latest destruction that it endured in its last pre Yom Kippur days, I still had a little bit of stubborn hope that as long as a Jewish heart beat in the town, the tradition of many generations of Demblin would not be completely extinguished. I spoke to that with Davidel Yitzchakel.

"But there's nobody with whom to pray, there's no minyan", the Jew answered with his face looking down embittered.

I said to him, "It will be".

27

By shut doors and shutters, in well covered windows, David Yetzchakiel, who by that time didn't have his wife and children any more, dressed up in his coat which was worn at the High Holidays, and he tied it with a sash and wrapped himself in a tallit, put it over his head and he stood and prayed, the Mayrev prayer of Yom Kippur. Two little dripping candles burned, only a few young people were there. With a choking crying voice and a broken heart he said the last Kol Nidre, quiet, resigned and almost not rocking back and forth. The few remaining Jews stood with heads bent over, their prayers, and as if for the last time, said word by word, *Al hat*, and quietly struck themselves on the breast with the hand, davening the whole time. They stood before my eyes, a few people very close to me, our beloved ones, those who had been killed and deported. And as well I saw in my mind all of the nightmarish scenes of the whole time that we'd endured. The empty barren city, the blood and the tears of the ghetto.

After praying, when one, because it was after all Yom Kippur, wished everybody a good year, Barrish, Davidel's younger brother, who still had at that time his wife and children with him, while shaking hands, cried and prayed that the greeting we should give him is that at least you won't be separated from your family.

When, after praying, one by one quietly, and with a deathly fear, shuffled off, hugging the walls in the dark courtyard, the moon, full and pale, shined down from among the clouds as if she were looking for something in the emptied slaughtered town, perhaps the Jews who used to greet the moon, and quickly she disappeared again among the clouds...

IN THE GHETTO AND IN THE CAMPS

BY ANDZJA TUPOLSKY

When the Jews were concentrated in the ghetto in the year 1941, we were sure that the time for our destruction by the murderous Nazis had arrived. But the Germans decided that part of the Jews of the city would be employed in numerous jobs such as in the nearby airport, agricultural jobs, etc. The first Jews that were selected for these jobs were the family members of the Judenrat. Luckily, thanks to the efforts of our mother, we were able to be included in the list of the working families. I was then a 10 year old girl and in spite of my young age, I was working in the airport for 8 to 10 hours a day like the adults. But this condition didn't last for many days. The Nazis decided that Demblin must become Judenrein. The Gestapo surrounded the ghetto and started to concentrate all of the Jews in it, into a concentration site. Only the Jews who were working in the numerous job sites were not bothered. My family and I, although having our working license, happened to be at home the same day, and not at our job at the airport. When we heard the rumor that the Germans were expelling and concentrating the Jews from their houses, we tried to go back to our work site at the airport. However, we could not get to the airport, since the guards had already surrounded the entire ghetto, and did not let us pass. We were very desperate and helpless not knowing what to do. The only choice left for us was to join all the other miserable people. The Germans announced in the street that every Jew who is caught will be shot on the spot. Screams and cries of the mothers and fathers were sounds throughout the ghetto. "*Shemah Yisrael*", cried many Jews with no salvation for their help. Mother, my younger sister and I, started to walk on our way to our execution. We were marching four in a line along Warshavsky street and our Christian neighbors stood along the sidewalk looking at us, satisfied, as if it was a ceremonial march.

[See PHOTO-C51 at the end of Section C]

We went towards our death very scared. Our eyes were dry from crying so much and we all felt helpless and scared. We were all marching towards our extinction. Innocent boys, girls, fathers and mothers were witnessing how they and their children were marching towards their extinction without any help. We were marching and the S.S. men were guarding us from all directions.

We were getting towards the edge of Warshavsky street and soon we would arrive at the train station that would carry us to the concentration camp. Suddenly my mother discovered me. She got close to me and whispered that I should try and run away from the line. She said that I look like a typical Christian girl. "Escape" she whispered to me again, "we still have a few more houses to pass by

so that you can escape into one of them. Hurry up, hurry up, save yourself. We are getting close to the train station and then it will be too late."

But my conscience couldn't let me do so. I couldn't see my mother and my four year old sister continue on the march and I would run away from them. I told Mom that she should try to escape first and I would escape and follow her. And so she did. Mom was still holding my younger sister's hand and escaped from the line and from the street where they were marching and jumped into an adjacent house that belonged to a Christian neighbor that was familiar to us. His wife permitted Mom to hide in the attic, and while Mother was stepping upstairs, she started hearing the steps of another woman that also escaped from the line and followed Mother. However, the Germans tracked that woman and immediately followed her.

When mother saw the Nazis, she escaped immediately and mingled again in the line of people who were marching towards their end. Meanwhile, I was still marching within the long lines. When I met Mother again in the line, we immediately exchanged our scarves, so that she would not be recognized by the murderers. But Mother again tried to convince me to try my luck in escaping. And so I did. At the end of Warshavsky street, by the grove in front of the train station, I got out of the line and stood on the pavement by the Polish viewers, who looked peacefully at the Jews marching towards their extinction. Very slowly, I started to walk the Pulawy road. I walked and walked and I didn't know where my feet were taking me. I finally arrived at a house of a Christian woman who was familiar to me, but she locked the door in my face and didn't let me get in, even for a few minutes. She kicked me away and warned me that she would carry me back to the train station. I walked to the road again. It was dusk and getting to be dark. I was walking through fields that I had never walked in before, and I didn't know where my feet were going to carry me to. I was very lonely, neglected and miserable. What would be my end? And if I was caught, what would I say?

Suddenly I saw Mom holding my young sister's hand. I started to yell and call her, but she was running and couldn't hear my voice and disappeared from my eyes. For a moment I thought that I had just imagined my mother. Desperate, I continued to walk on. On my way, I suddenly met a Christian woman named Komasova and I asked her if she saw my mother on her way. She replied that she indeed saw my mother hiding in a free-standing toilet positioned in the nearby field. I started to run toward the direction that the Christian woman mentioned and as I got closer I heard my mother's voice, "Andzia, come here, hurry up". Upon my arrival, I recognized my mother, my younger sister, and another unfamiliar woman, who was sitting beside them. My mother immediately gave me a warm hug.

We were sitting there until the late hours of the night. From a distance we could hear the shootings that put an end to the lives of the Jews. Sometime after midnight, Mother, by herself, emerged from the hiding place, approached the house of one of the Polish people nearby and for a handsome fee asked him if he could go back to the city and see who from the Jews remained alive and also if he could ask the Jewish policemen if it would be possible to go back to the agricultural ranch where we were registered as working labor. The man agreed to go back to the city, and after great difficulties we managed to return to our work in the ranch, and join the working laborers in Demblin. At the working camp, we found the rest of our family members, and we were working there for the next four years until we were transported to Czenstechov camp. In that camp, where the conditions were unbearable, we stayed for half a year. At that time, one day, our father was sent away from us to Buchenwald camp, and we never saw him alive again. We were also supposed to be transported to the same camp, but the Germans were not able to execute the action because on the same night, we could hear a faraway gunfire, in Czenstechov, where the Russian army arrived and most of the Germans were running away. However, we were not very happy, because, just a day before the liberation our father was sent to the execution camp and we were not able to see him anymore. May his soul rest in peace.

HOW WE TAUGHT, GAVE COURAGE AND SAVED JEWISH CHILDREN OF DEMBLIN

BY AIDA MILGROIM-TZITRINBOIM / RAMAT-GAN

(Reworked according to the testimony given in Yad-Vashem, 6/-178/2541, in Tel Aviv. Translated from Polish)

My parents, Yididah and Hinda Milgroim, were born in Demblin. My father was for a long time a member of the orthodox community there. In the material sense we lived well because my father, a businessman, had quite a few properties and a lot of tenants. Before the War, I finished my teacher's studies in Warsaw. In 1933, my father died. As the older children in the family got married, I remained with my mother at home.

A

With the outbreak of the War in 1939, both of us managed to live through various round-ups and wanderings without any place to really feel secure. After a lot of hard experiences, we made our way back to Demblin where draconian, anti-Jewish laws were already enforced, as well as the forbidding of our children to study in school. Nevertheless, I, with the cooperation of several mothers, held at our house a private school for a group of children each day for 2 hours. The students would change, and the school would last from 8 in the morning to 5 or 6 in the evening. Later on, we were able to continue that activity in the ghetto that had been created.

But the conducting of an illegal Jewish school like this, and for little kids of 7 or 8 years old up to 14 or 15 years old, was an activity which was extremely dangerous, especially since there were so many students and the numbers got up to 70, 80 or even 100. I taught according to the school program, not necessarily after a Jewish fashion. The lessons were conducted in Polish and the students were examined during the term according to the Public Polish school standards. The Pole, Mikulsky, (if I remember his name correctly) would come and give the examinations. He even gave school certificates after the ending of the semester. He did this secretly, but he had to be paid. I didn't have anybody to help me. I had to deal with all these very difficult and risky responsibilities all by myself.

When the Germans learned about all this, I had to hide out for awhile. Then I started my lessons again, in private houses, each time in a different location.

In that epic we succeeded in bringing my sister and her child from the Warsaw ghetto. There, in the ghetto, both of them had been going hungry. My younger sister had already come back to Demblin and opened a school and I helped her.

B

The 6th of May, 1942, was the first deportation. Everybody was driven from their homes and on the way beaten, tortured and shot. My mother was killed at that point. I and my sister and her child saved ourselves. Our school work ended because both of us had to go out every morning to forced labor at various work sites which the German villains thought up for Jews to do. The child remained in the street and so we decided that it was better to send him back to Warsaw where my brother-in-law lived. A Polish tram operator took the child with him to the capital, and when the tram crossed over into the ghetto, he left the little boy there and the little boy himself knew how to find his father.

When my brother-in-law became sick with typhus, my sister went to him in Warsaw and remained there in the ghetto.

The 15th of October, 1942 was the second round-up, and again I was able to escape the massacre. While the victims of the first deportation, 2,000 Jews, were sent to Sobibor, the transport of the second deportation went to Treblinka. On the spot, gathering people up, they shot down 60 people who were trying to get out of the place where they'd been enclosed.

In the Demblin ghetto, in that year, they brought in Jews from other places. I remember a transport from Preschov, Czechoslovakia, how they arrived and took the place of the deported Demblin Jews from the first deportation. In my apartment, we took in the three person Friedman family from Preschov.

The Czeck Jews suffered the same sorrows, troubles and deprivation as we did and had to work in the city and in the surrounding camps.

I was transformed into a worker at the camp by the rail lines along with several thousand other men, women and children. The camp commander was a Jew from Vienna, Venkart. Besides the wire fence was a barracks in which the chief of the camp lived, a German, a non-commissioned Officer, Kattinger. Children were able to be put to work together with grown-ups, and the real little children stayed behind in the camp itself. During an unexpected visit by the Germans, the little children were stuffed under the cots.

C

This was our first experience in a camp, therefore, at that time, we still had a little bit of money with us, and other precious things which enabled us to buy from the

Poles different things that we needed which they brought up to the barbed wire fence. But only thanks to having bribed Kattinger was it possible to carry on in this way in this camp, let things come into the camp, get what we needed, use our money, as opposed to being total slaves.

For those who weren't there it seems unbelievable, this story of hiding children. It remains however a fact, that even the three year old swallows knew instinctively to hide themselves and lie quiet as mice when danger was close. The camp commander Venkart knew that my profession was as a teacher, and he let me off hard labor and ordered me to take care of the children. Instead of the really hard field labor, I remained with my beloved pupils (boys and girls). Most importantly, I busied myself with those children whose parents were away at work, the women digging potatoes and the men carrying water, sorting old iron and laying rail lines.

From the kitchen I was able to get a special diet for the children and to begin to start teaching them. Of course, in conditions like those, this wasn't what you'd call a normal school, but I was able to implant in them a little bit of knowledge and help them to distinguish between good and bad, tell them various stories from books and sing songs with them, among which were quite a few of my own, about life in the camp.

In the whole camp there was one guard, perhaps also he had been bribed. The real danger, as I said before, came from unexpected inspections. The several songs I wrote about the camp were in Yiddish and here's an example:

Quiet, shh, don't move,
there's going to be another inspection in the camp.
Shh, quiet, don't make any ruckus,
because the inspection is going to be here very soon.
And when there is an inspection, there's hell to pay.
It's terrible, because they are not supposed to see
any children in the camp.
Shh, quiet, don't make any ruckus,
there's going to be an inspection here soon.

The children were very attentive and disciplined. And they understood the danger that lurked around them. Even the littlest ones knew that a lot of things shouldn't be seen and shouldn't be heard. When they laid down, stuck under the cots, everyone knew that they had to lie very, very still, without moving. And about that as well, we came up with a little song:

In the camp are miracles, everybody knows that.
There are a hundred children, but, during an inspection
nobody sees one of them.

**Refrain: Miracles, miracles, miracles, miracles and wonders
 Miracles, miracles, miracles, miracles and wonders**

**In the first day of Chanukah, there was a miracle,
we got little toys - everybody saw.**

Refrain: Miracle, miracle, etc.

We talk now about cleanliness, from morning until night.

Really, for two weeks, Walter made that very well.

Refrain: Miracle, miracle, etc.

D

With the help of these little dreamed up songs of ours, we were able to formulate our own way of looking at and criticizing and protesting the conditions that prevailed in the camp. If a bath wasn't provided quickly enough for the children, or they didn't get meals that weren't good enough, it was an opportunity to criticize with another song:

When they provide lunch, all the children eat.

If you find a potato, it's a big wonder.

Refrain: Miracle, miracle, etc.

In the camp it's a holiday today, the first since October.

**The women don't cook, because they're cleaning everything up
and making it absolutely spotless.**

Refrain: Miracle, miracle, etc.

**Herr Venkart, the barracks are being prepared for breakfast
for the children.**

If it's really true, that is the greatest miracle of all.

Refrain: Miracle, miracle, etc.

It really was something that was quite extraordinary, that in the camps things remained quiet, especially with so many children being hidden all over the place. But this was really a result and thanks to the goods that we had with us, the gold and the money, with which we were able to bribe the Germans.

But there were also other very, very hard burdens placed on the children, like when the smallest of them had to go to work at the hardest work, chopping wood, carrying coals, digging in the fields. On this theme the following song was born:

All the children who stand before you - all of them are equal,

There's not one who's rich or one who's poor.

And for us as well, life is not easy.

Torn away from home, many months now,
we work with adults, side by side.
At dawn, at dawn, the work begins at seven in the morning.

We wonder if it's good and beautiful, the camp is made clean.
We help, we don't want anybody to be humiliated or insulted.
We sweep the streets, we dig in the garden,
We chop wood, we carry coal - and yet, we're proud.
You should know camp, you should know camp, you should know
camp - this camp is our home.

A good number of the children would often duck away from their work and prepare food for their parents who would come home very, very tired and broken down each night from their forced labor.

E

Marisha Lorberboim, from Ryki, helped me. Together we taught the children to read, write, told them different stories, history and explained everything in Polish. On Purim or Chanukah, we told the significance of the holidays and even tried to prepare little special things to eat. In this way, for a few hours at a time, the children forgot their very, very sorrowful condition.

We continued taking care of the children, devoting ourselves to them. We even got together little performances. The little performers, danced, sang and recited for the adults, when in the evenings they returned from their hard work. In this way the days and nights drew out until July, 1944, when the Russians approached our area. Only at that time, the Germans began to liquidate the camps.

F

In the beginning of July, they sent a number of our Jews to the camp at Czenstechov, including 15 children. In a few days they sent everybody else, who had remained, to Czenstechov as well. As soon as we arrived there we learned that in the first transport from Demblin, they'd taken 15 children from their parents and shot them.

We labored to take the older children with the adults, but later, 38 children remained outside of the fence, separated from their mothers and fathers. Ukrainian bandits, armed with revolvers and axes, guarded the children.

In Czenstechov we arrived in a gigantic camp surrounded by barbed wire. They drove us into filthy barracks. In the camp they found thousands of slave laborers who worked in the enormous German ammunition factory. They gave us other work, but I asked to stay with the children, knowing the fate that awaited them. I wanted to be able to comfort them and soothe them in their last hours. But it seems that it was fated that they live a little bit longer, because these children were not immediately executed like those in the first group. When they brought them a little container of food to eat, not one of the children made a move to the soup, although their hunger was great. They were afraid that they would be poisoned. And so I was the first one to take something from the big bowl of soup, and then the children took a little bit of soup for themselves without fear.

The mothers and fathers saw from their side of the fence what was happening to the children, and they strained to be able to see and be able to pick out their own child. They went through unbelievable suffering, feeling sure that their sons and daughters were just waiting to die. It went on that way for days. I was the only adult among the children. From time to time, a Jewish camp policeman would show up and seeing the agony of the parents, I was able to talk two of the Jewish policemen into allowing the children, one by one, to say good-bye to their parents. Although this was an activity that could have meant death for all three of us, the policemen organized it so that each mother separately, was able to come to the gate, and I sent her child there and they fell into each other's arms, hugged and kissed, and then the child had to come back immediately. Even the littlest one knew how to act. It was well known to them what they had to do.

G

Ruling over our camp was the German with the vicious glance, Bartenschlagger. With a lot of money and jewelry we were able to bribe him so that he allowed the children to remain in the camp. Although each day there were inspections and checks and people were brutalized, during the six months that we were there, we were able to keep the children.

And that's the way it went on until the 16th of January, 1945. The Russians had by that time surrounded Czenstechov, and the Germans wanted to take us deep into Germany. We decided that we weren't going to move. When the murderers came to get us they were frightened by our fastness and they cut out, knowing that the Russians were almost in the city. The next morning, as a matter of fact, a Soviet tank made it's way into the camp and we were freed!

After leaving the camp, I encountered my brother-in-law in Czenstechov, the husband of my sister Ruth. He said that my whole big family, everybody was killed, my sister Ruth, with her little girl, Noisha, killed in Maidanek. My sister Rachel, her husband, Yisrael Kevat and her daughter Hela (the parents in

Plaschow, and the daughter in Shtutof). My sister Andja and her husband Blondovsky, with their daughters Ruzsia and Hela and also my brother Yankev, his wife Marisia and her son Yurek. My brother, Mitshislov, his wife Esther and his daughter Fanya.

In the camp in Czenstechov was our neighbor from Demblin, Henryk-Tzvi Tzitrinboim. In 1945 we got married in Demblin, but it was impossible to remain in the town because of the savagery of the Poles towards the Jews who had survived. We escaped to Lodz and there we found the surviving daughter of my sister. From Lodz we fled to Germany and in March 1949, with my daughter Aiyla, we arrived in Israel.

KARYOV-MODZJITZ-BUCHENWALD

BY CHAIM SHTAMFATER

UNTIL THE HOLOCAUST

There was a Jew by the name of Arye Korover, a religious teacher in Modzjitz. He came from the village of Karyov. Why did he come to Modzjitz? When Karyov was burned, he rented a wagon, he piled on the little bit of his poverty. He came to Modzjitz.

He had three boys: Chaim-Yitzhak, Leizor and Shaya. He was a very, very poor man. He didn't bring any possessions with him, really, to Modzjitz. They stopped right in the middle of the market place. They didn't even have a place to lay their heads down. They didn't even have a pot to cook something in. We stood around the wagon in our ragged clothes and everybody who walked by just kind of stopped and gaped at us. Who are these gypsies who speak Yiddish? One person said that maybe they just lived among Jews and picked up Yiddish.

My father went looking for a place to stay in. He didn't have any money. There was a Jewish shoemaker by the name of Shmuel Vazitch. His wife was called Sara Kolokof. He had a little shack and we put up there. That was just a little bit after Passover.

What happened later? Since my father was a hard core Hasid, he went to the Hasidim to ask what he should do next. You have to eat after all. They advised him that he should become a religious teacher in town. So they actually were able to drag together 8 little boys as students. The problem was, where was he supposed to teach these kids? His landlord, Shmuel Vazitch said that he could teach them in the house. He didn't get any money from the deal. He did it because it was a mitzvah.

From teaching 8 little kids you can't really make any money either. There was a baker's wife, Sara Liba, and she needed somebody to knead the bread and the challah. My mother went to work and earned bread and challah for the whole week.

Still our poverty was great. Imagine that until I was 11 years old, I never wore a new piece of clothes on my body. Everything was patched up and passed on from old clothes.

There was an old shoemaker in town, Shmaiya Kalenovsky. He was 80 years old. Every Passover, he made from old soldier's boots a little pair for children. Of course we didn't always have something to eat at home. A whole week would go

by and we wouldn't see a even a little piece of meat. If we managed to buy a calf's head for the Sabbath there was a great deal of celebration at home.

My mother used to say to my father, "Just look at what the children look like."

And my father used to say, "Eh, it doesn't hurt, the real world has yet to come. Who has something in this world is not going to have something in the next world."

He promised her paradise. In the future of course. He wanted me to study. He really pushed me. Since I was always really hungry it was very hard for me to learn anything. He put me out to work as the assistant to a religious teacher. I just had certain days that I could depend on a meal. I already understood at the age of 13 that part of my life was making a living through being a hanger on.

I didn't want to say the blessing with the other children. But he made me. At that point I went out and I learned a trade, wheelwright. I went to study with the wheelwright, Meir-Yechail Stalmach. When my father found out that I was learning a craft he went crazy, because I had shamed him. I was ruining the family's name. There weren't any people who worked at crafts in my family. For over a year we didn't speak to each other, until I started to bring home a ruble. At that point my father and I made up.

My father's daily fare was quite pathetic. At 12 in the afternoon he had a little bit of bread with a little onion. At 4 o'clock he had a little bit of peas. The whole day he was teaching children. When I came home, he taught me.

The wheelwright had a sister-in-law who was the same age as I was. They started to talk. They were gossiping around that she was going to be my bride. But my mother said that because I picked her out myself, that wasn't appropriate at all and I obeyed my mother. It was only when I started to earn 5 rubles a week that I went back and tried to rearrange the match.

I started to earn very good money. I was able to get a really nice fur cloak for my father and to get a nice dress for my mother. I was able to contribute 3 rubles a week to the household. The "stain of the family" was erased.

After that I did get married, everything was fine. I bought a house from Leibkele Konyech. After that I made my little workshop. Everything was going just the way it should have gone until the coming of the murderous Germans.

DURING THE OCCUPATION BY THE GERMANS

My wife was injured by shrapnel. The Germans took her to a hospital in Radom. She stayed at the hospital for 4 months. After that, she remained at home for

another 4 months and she became healthy again. But afterwards they sent her to Sobibor and there she was burned up together with the 5 children of her sister.

Everything that I owned the Poles plundered and robbed. I worked in a camp with 60 Jews. They picked me out with another guy to have responsibility over all the Jews.

Once we had to work for an additional 2 hours. The Jews said that they weren't going to work for an additional 2 hours, that they always made them do that, and that they were just going to go home. The next day the supervisor came. He called us both into the office and asked us, "why didn't the Jews work yesterday? What kind of sabotage is that? This is war time. You can get shot for stuff like that. You're the ones who are responsible for these Jews." We began to cry. Something about the way we were acting moved him. "If it ever happens again, you will pay for it with your lives."

After that they drove the Jews out of the work place. They sent all of us to Czenstechov, and there put us to work in the iron works. There the supervisors continually tormented and beat people. Afterwards they sent us to Buchenwald. There things were very, very bitter. Every night they would take out 40 corpses. One laid down and never got up.

Traveling from Czenstechov to Buchenwald, they packed us into rail cars with sealed doors and tiny little windows. There was room for 50 people but they actually packed in 150 people. There wasn't enough room to breath. We had to take care of all our needs in that rail car. Whoever was able to survived it and a lot of them didn't and died. By the time we got there, those that managed to come out of that car were very few indeed. On the roofs the Germans were standing with machine guns. The trip took 8 days.

When we arrived in Buchenwald, the German police greeted us, took us out with big dogs. In front of the gate, they told everybody to take off all their clothes. They shaved everybody's hair off, all over their bodies. They smeared us with some kind of substance that burned like fire. After that they drove us down into a cellar. There they poured cold water on us and then hot water. After that they drove us into a well. There they smeared us with something else which also burned like fire. They gave us camp clothes and took us to the barracks where we found there were already 2,600 people. Each day they dragged out 40 corpses.

On one occasion I was lying down on a hard bunk with 2 Hungarians. We were speaking among ourselves. A watchman with a stick came over and beat us on the legs. He hit me in the knee which became very swollen. They gave me a little tag to go into the hospital. I had to stay there for 14 days. I went in there with a Frenchman. They told me to sit down. They were going to give me a bed. They

laid me down on a hard bench. Two of them grabbed me by the head and two of them by the feet and I got hit in the knees. I started to scream. They screamed at me:

"You dirty Jew, your whole life you've been speculating, and now you're screaming? Shut your mouth or you're going to be dead in a minute." Then he wrapped my knees with a paper bandage, gave me a kick in the ass and threw me out of the hospital.

After that, they took me into the hospital again with Mendle Viatraks's son. He died that same night, but he lay with me dead for two days because the people who were working as orderlies in the hospital were so desperate to get his portion of food everyday...

WE SAW THE CHILDREN NO MORE

BY DEVORAH REZNIK

During the first round-up in May of 1942, my husband Yidel was working at the airfield. I and my two children were at home. They drove us out into the street. A lot of people were already standing around there. I made a point of standing as far back as I could. I saw that they were choosing people to take away. I tried to figure out what I should do and what I had to do in order to not be deported, and suddenly a Christian appeared near me, somebody who had been one of our customers. I figured the situation out quickly and I asked her to go to the Ukrainian (the S.S. people were in front *[the S.S. was composed of Lithuanians and Ukrainians as well as Germans]*) so that this person should say to the Ukrainian that she had some shoes that she had to get from me and it was a very important matter and he would also, the Ukrainian, get a wristwatch out of the deal and the Christian woman would get my ring. The Ukrainian finally disappeared. I decided to go to the old suburbs because there I had a Polish acquaintance and the Ukrainian left.

I went to this gentile and he didn't want to let us in. We were very upset because there were a lot of Polish children who were following us around.

I then went to my landlady. She let me in, I changed clothes. She took me to a friend of hers' house. I was able to get away with all this because the murderers were so involved with pushing the rest of the Jewish population (our dear brothers and sisters) to the train where they were going to be deported. The Jews who remained, they still had use for so they let us go home.

Later on, there was a second round-up and my husband was at work. I was supposed to be at work too but I had paid somebody do go in my stead. I wanted to be with my children and had I not I am sure the children would have been taken away.

At the end of 1942, we went into the Demblin camp, where we remained until July of 1944. The director of the camp was Venkart. At that point, an S.S. man from Czenstechov by the name of Bartenschlager came and the murderer Venkart sent us with other families to Czenstechov. We begged him not to send us because we had children. But he didn't listen. I don't remember if it was 12 or 14 children. When we arrived in Czenstechov they took the children away from us. The Germans fooled us. They said that they had to examine the children separately. And we never saw the children again.

Cursed shall be Venkart, the Jewish murderer. As for the German murderers there is no fit punishment bad enough.

We were liberated on the 16th of January, 1945.

MEMORIES OF HITLER'S HELL

BY RHODA LINDOVER

I'm not going to write down everything or describe everything that I saw or that happened to me because of the state of my health. I don't dare put that much stress on myself. I'll just outline the last epic.

The first round-up was in 1942 in the month of May. The whole family was still together at that point. My husband, my parents, my sister-in-law with her child. But already in the first round-up, the bandits sent them to Sobibor. The 6th of May is very well engraved in my memory because of the horrible events that happened. Very early in the morning, my saintly husband went out into the street to see what was happening but he couldn't get back because the town was being surrounded with trucks and guarded by S.S. and police. People were running around like crazy as if to say where are we going to run to, where are we going to go?

My husband and my brother looked for a place to hide. They sent a messenger to us to say that we shouldn't go to the market place, but to find a place to hide with a gentile. Maybe somebody would let us in. My parents didn't want to hear about hiding and they said to me I'm young and that I should save myself. But they went to the square all by themselves and with them went my sister-in-law with her child.

I went to a gentile neighbor's house and begged him to let me come in until the murderers had left the city. And understand that I immediately gave him everything I had on me. He did let me stay there as long as it took until the Germans started going house to house to route out Jews and at that point he threw me out and said that he was afraid that the Germans would find me.

I went out and passed the gendarmerie and kept running. Happily, the villains didn't recognize me as a Jewess. The whole town of Jews had already been gathered together in the square to be taken away. I ran to the station thinking that maybe I could travel to some little town where there was still some Jews left. On the way, a Sergeant from the fortress recognized me and he was a customer in our business. He took me to his house, in an attic and hid me there. In the same house lived Moshele Zvigenboin who was a Tailor.

In the attic there was a little window which looked out onto the street and from there we could see everything. I heard a howling and crying in the square and the shooting of the bandits. Later, around 6 p.m. in the evening, the whole transport went through the street underneath where I was hidden. And I saw my dear parents and sister-in-law. My mother carried the child in her arms. Just as the

tears flowed down from the people's eyes, the rain flowed from heaven at that point. The people were beaten by the bandits with their rifle butts because they couldn't go fast enough.

When I saw that I wanted to run down into the street and just go with them in the transport, the gentile stopped me, he wouldn't let me go. He locked me in. But with one blow I was able to open the door and went down, but he wouldn't let me go into the street until it had become very dark. That's the first time that I went into the street. I didn't find one Jew. Where was I supposed to go now? Everybody was gone. I went home, but to who? Coming home to the house, I found my saintly husband and my brother who were striking their heads on the wall in absolute desperation since everybody had been taken away. But, they hadn't planned on seeing me. They hadn't realized that I'd been able to hide.

There was nothing in the house because the goyim had robbed everything. So we went looking for Jews. We found a few Jews who had also been able to hide themselves. That's the way we were in the town until the 12th of May. After that, we went into the Demblin camp. The other Jews remained in the city until the second round-up.

Exactly when the second round-up happened I don't remember. My brother remained in the city because he was very sick with typhus. He was hidden in another house, in an attic with Esther Shapiro and her husband. Before the end of the second round-up, I went out of the camp not caring whether I was allowed to or not and I ran into the city. And the scenes of the dead laying in the street are things that are etched into my memory. I went among the dead and turned every corpse over to see if it was my brother, but then I found my brother among the living. However, my joy did not last long with him.

The few Jews who did remain went into the camp after the second round-up. My saintly brother went to a Christian to hide himself. At the end of 1944, the Christian's neighbor went to the gendarmes and ratted that there was a Jew hanging around and the gendarmes came right away with their dogs who tore my brother to pieces. A bullet was too precious to them, they couldn't use a bullet. I was told all of this after the liberation.

I and my saintly husband went into the Demblin camp. In the year 1943 the S.S. came and took everything that we still had.

That's the way we spent our sorry days until 1944. When the Russians got close to the Vistula, they wanted to take us all to Auschwitz, but we remained in the middle of the road in Czenstechov. There, the Latvians and the Ukrainians took us down to rail cars and we went to a camp called Hasag to work in the ammunition factory. My husband was quickly broken by all of this, especially when he saw a sign in the camp that said, "Don't laugh, because if you do, you're going to be

melted down to scrap." With each day, myself and my dear husband felt that the end was coming. He was very, very desperate and resigned.

Two weeks after coming to the camp, the bandits made a deportation of women and at the same time they shot quite a few children, among them many of those from Demblin. A sister of my husband was sent away with her child, with her little girl, to Germany. The second child stayed with me.

When the Russians came close, they took all the men and put them in rail cars and sent them to Germany. Three days later they drove the women out of the barracks and ordered them to begin to march to Germany. We stayed out that way, just standing around, for hours, in a bitter cold until the Russian airplanes started to fly overhead. Our prayer was that they should blow us up with bombs before the Germans would have a chance to murder us.

The 16th of January, 1945 we were liberated by the Russians. My husband didn't live to see that. The men had been taken to Buchenwald and my husband was being led to work one day, couldn't go fast enough, so they killed him.

Of my whole family, I survived with a sister, who is now in Australia. My brother and his wife survived in Russia and they're also in Australia now.

ON THEIR LAST JOURNEY

BY BINYAMIN SHTAMLER / RAMAT GAN

When Hitler's boot soldiers invaded Poland, thus starting the Second World War, I was a soldier in the Polish army. I was sent to the front, but did not fight because the Polish army was retreating. After a month of difficult wandering I came back, in December 1939 from imprisonment, to Demblin. The Germans, who had occupied the town, were busy rebuilding Demblin's big airfield, which they had completely obliterated. To my surprise, I found there hundreds of Demblin's Jews who worked rebuilding the field for minimal wages. Under the regime of Ridz-Smigli and the minister Beck, who were anti-Semites, no such work was given to Jews.

Friends and acquaintances suggested that I get a job at the airfield. Even my friend Mr. Leizor Teichman, who was chief of the Judenrat, advised me to do so. I came to work as a certified electrician. With a Polish foreman, I received a group of people to work with. We returned every evening to sleep at our homes in the town.

The Jews who did not work at the airfield found other work. But we suffered from confiscation's, poll tax and fines and many insults. I especially remember the punishment we received for not filling up the quota of people for cleaning the town's streets. In this case, the Germans collected the Judenrat in the market and forced them to ride piggyback on each other, to amuse the Nazi sadists.

With the establishment of the Demblin ghetto in the end of 1941, and the beginning of the offensive on Russia, who had joined the Allied Forces, the Jews' situation worsened. The first victim that was murdered by the Nazis was Akiva Rothschild's wife. The excuse was that she left the ghetto's area.

The quartermaster's chief, an infamous Nazi by the name of Geede, who was stationed in Pulaw, used to come to Demblin every once in a while and confiscate anything he wanted. This hurt the town's Jews. Once he came to confiscate merchandise from Binyamin Itsik, and Mr. Leizor Teichman heard about it. Teichman went immediately to the Demblin police, where he had some influence, and reported to them that merchandise was being confiscated behind their back, so maybe they would lose their share in the loot. The German police consequently went to the site and sent Geede out of town.

A few days later Geede assembled the Judenrat staff from the area, the ones who were under his jurisdiction, issued them some administrative orders and ordered them back to their stations. All except for Teichman, who was forbidden to return to Demblin. Teichman was transferred to another town, and was murdered there publicly by Geede, apparently knowing that he had something to do with his having to leave Demblin. The town's Jews were mournful. Especially missing Teichman were

those who needed welfare; Mr. Teichman had taken care of them with devotion. He had a talent for public work, although he stayed away from politics all those years. He managed the community as well as anyone could and tried to better the residents' condition without discrimination.

The Dembliners lived their lives without knowing what the future had in store for them. Then came the bitter day, May 5, 1942. It was a spring day. The bright blue skies hid what was to become of the Demblin community. That day, at dawn, there were frightening rumors that the S.S. had surrounded the city. We did not know what was to happen in town and were very worried about our families there. When we arrived at work, we were assembled, unusually, by a special gate. After a short time, the camp's commissioner told us that we should stand with the rest of the town's Jews at the market square, next to the house of Reb Zalman the folk doctor.

We went there worried. When we arrived, we found most of Demblin's Jews standing in lines, men separated away from women, surrounded by armed S.S. troops. I took my place at the end of the line, by the road to the Study House, so I could see my family and join them. All was in vain -- I could see none of them.

At that time I saw the shoemaker Lazor Zucker bending to fetch his hat, which had fallen, holding a suitcase with his other hand. The murderer Geede noticed him, whipped him and kicked him with his nailed boots. The suitcase fell to the floor and burst open. It contained tallit, tfillin and a piece of bread. When Zucker tried to lift the tallit and tfillin, Geede beat him to death.

So we stood awaiting an order. During all that time we heard curses, whipping and other tortures. It seems that despite our not knowing, the labor camp officials, who were interested in skilled workers, tried to keep us from being transported. From this transport, several of us, including myself, were pulled out of the lines and returned to work at the airfield. The rest of the town's residents, including my father, mother, brothers and other relatives, were sent to the train station without knowing their fate.

When I returned to the camp, I immediately went to the train station. I met a few people on the way who told me about the atrocities that were done there. The way to the station was filled with soldiers and armed S.S. men. I went to the cars trying to save someone from my family, but in vain. I heard the screams and the crying of the poor ones; the Germans shouting and their dogs barking.

I returned heart broken to the camp, recounting the atrocities that I had witnessed. I saw my brothers and father only from the distance, when they walked with the rest of Demblin's Jews to their deaths. I did not see my mother and sisters.

(Written by Yisrael Rozenwien)

JEWS OF DEMBLIN TELL ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

We are now going to give you in shortened form these testimonies by various surviving Jews of Demblin. People who are grown up, people who are young and people who are children, in the years 1946 and 1947, told about their memories to the people who were working for the historical commission at the central committee of the liberated Jews in the American section of Germany. Although these testimonies, which are answers to a list of questions, are full of contradictions and the details are not often right, and they contradict the real historical facts and events, since these testimonies were included in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, we decided to publish them in our book, although in a condensed and edited form.

1. THE STORY OF FELA GEMVITSKA

Demblin was an old community with hundreds of years of history. Until the outbreak of the War, 6,000 Jews lived there. The main forms of making a living were in business and through craft work. In the town there was one synagogue, 1 study house, a cemetery, a drama circle, a business bank, and various political organizations. During the German occupation, the synagogue and the study house were destroyed. The bricks and other building materials from the destroyed buildings were used by the Germans for other kinds of building projects.

These are some of the most important events in the city from the beginning of the War, the 1st of September, 1939:

A few days after the outbreak of the War, the Germans came into the town. Their first anti-Jewish orders were that everybody wear white arm bands with a blue Star of David on them. They started taking people to forced labor, unloading coal, taking the synagogue and the study house apart, cleaning the streets and working at the airfield. Women worked with men.

In the city they started a punishment camp and there they beat them. There was one occasion when a Jewish youth was punished with 80 lashes on his bare body and with the last blow he died.

Somebody who came late, or didn't show up to work, the Germans would call out of where they lived and if they didn't come, they got somebody else in his stead and tortured him until the guilty one showed up. Then they'd let the other person go.

The Germans would loot and plunder Jewish businesses and dwellings. They drove up with an automobile, took whatever they liked, like bedding and sheets

and blankets and furniture, goods from stores, garments of all kinds, and they demanded tributes of 80,000 zlotys.

In the beginning of 1941, the Germans carried out a confiscation of all Jewish property, but even earlier, after occupying the city, they had taken the best Jewish apartments and dwellings which were prepared for them before hand. At work, they cut off Jews' beards. Sometimes they just grabbed their beards out with their hands and beat them murderously.

At the end of 1940, the Jews of Pulaw were deported to Demblin in rail cars, and because of the terrible cold, a lot of the children and old people froze to death on the way.

In the beginning of 1941, they established a Jewish quarter in Demblin. The 3rd of May, 1942, was the big deportation. Over a thousand Jews were sent off to Sobibor. After that action, they brought a transport of Jews from Czechoslovakia. They sent a Czech family into each house. Three months later, the second deportation, to Poniatov, took place. In that action, they deported almost all the Jews that remained. The people who they left were workers in agriculture, at the airport, the Jewish police and Judenrat.

In November, 1942, Demblin was *Judenrein* [Jewish free]. Only the workers at the airport were allowed in the camp in town which was a kind of a section of Maidanek. In the airfield the Jews worked together with Polish workers who would help them a little bit every now and then. But the Polish supervisors had a very, very bad attitude towards the Jews.

A few days before the liberation of Demblin in 1944, they deported all of the Jews in the city to the Czenstechov camp, Warta. A lot of the men went to the camp of Rakov. Two transports from Demblin went to Czenstechov. In the first transport, they were able with gold and money, to bribe the S.S. overseers, and the children remained, but hidden under the floorboards. After arriving in Czenstechov, they sent everybody to the baths and in that way they were easily able to rob everything that people were able to bring with them.

At the camp at Warta, everybody worked at the ammunition factory under the supervision of Jewish and Ukrainian supervisors who didn't conduct themselves any better than the Germans. The Jews were from Krakow. The commandant, Imerglik, his assistant Frenkel, the watchman Frekle and Shlavinsky, distinguished themselves for their ability to beat up their brother Jews during work or at the roll calls when everybody had to stand straight.

A lot of Dembliner Jews died from hunger in the camp or just disappeared without a trace, after they were taken away for some supposed infraction. There was one

instance when they hung someone just because he stole a little bit of something to eat.

In Warta we worked for six months, and before the liberation from Warta and Rakov, they got together a thousand men and drove them into Germany. On the way, perhaps half of them died. The other people from Warta were liberated by the Soviet Army on the 18th of January, 1945. They had the good luck to remain in Czenstechov because the Germans just didn't have time to evacuate them.

The gentile population of Demblin had a very bad attitude toward the Jews and helped the Germans in their anti-Jewish actions. There was not an organized Jewish uprising. The number of Jews who remained alive, I estimate at 800. The camps went through 500. There were a few people who were able to just save themselves on their own, one way or another.

Ansbach -- Mittelfrenkel, May 10, 1947 --- Interviewer: Hermann Aftergut

2. THE STORY OF MOSHE MELAVER

The Jewish community of Demblin, in Garvoliner district, was begun in 1862. Six-thousand Jews lived there, who were involved in trade and business and craft work. In the town, there were 20 little houses of prayer, 1 synagogue, a study house, a cemetery, 3 Jewish banks, a loan agency, and a free medical clinic. There was also a library, a school, a drama circle, an association of craftsman, a professional association and political parties.

A few weeks after the Germans marched into town, they burned the synagogue. When that happened a lot of holy books were burned up as well. The next morning, the German commandant called the president of the Judenrat and asked him, who burned the synagogue?

The gravestones of the cemetery, which was located 3 kilometers behind the town in Bobrowniki, were torn out and were used as pavement with the lettering up.

The Germans came into Demblin the 20th of September, 1939 and immediately set about robbing Jewish stores, threw the merchandise out, some of it they took for themselves, some of it they let the Polish population divide up. Then, a number of Jews returned to the city. Those Jews who had hidden themselves at the outbreak of the War, the Germans picked up on the street and sent away to Radom. Of that number, only three of them returned. The other ones were murdered there.

They began to pick up Jews for forced labor and beat them and tortured them and cut their beards. On a certain day, they ordered all the Jews to gather in the market place and the chief of the gendarmes gave them a little lecture about how

Jews should conduct themselves. The first thing they should do was to surrender all their radios, and if they failed to do that, they would get shot. When this last remark was made, the Polish onlookers applauded. Afterwards, they began to confiscate Jewish property.

At the end of 1939 they ordered Jews to wear white arm bands with blue Stars of David. Almost every day they came up with new strictures in Jewish homes. They managed to get all of the things of value. A commission of Poles participated in the confiscation of Jewish houses and businesses. At the end of 1940, the gold and fur action took place and they threatened Jews with death if they did not surrender their gold and their furs on their own.

In the beginning of 1941, in the winter, they created a ghetto, one that was not locked. They brought Jews from Pulaw to this ghetto. The Jews were employed at the airfield, at the train station, in agriculture outside the town, and unloading coal and in the firm Schultz.

The 6th of May, 1942, was the first deportation. They left the workers at the airfield, at the train station and at the firm Schultz. After the deportation, they created a camp at the airfield, where they sent the remaining workers. The regime in the camp was a very strict one. After that they created two more camps for workers, at the train station, and at Schultzes.

The 22nd of May, 1942, after the deportation, they brought 2,000 Jews from Preschov in Czechoslovakia into town and put them up in the ghetto that had been cleared out in the deportation. Some of the Slovakian Jews were employed at the hardest work in the camps, while some of the others lived in the ghetto in the most difficult conditions. On the 15th of October, 1942 was the second deportation, which was carried out by a small number of police with the help of the garrison of the Wermacht at the airfield. The deported Jews were sent off to Treblinka (Editor's note: In the previous testimony, that person identifies the destination as Sobibor and not as Treblinka. We allow this contradiction to remain, just as it was found in the original).

From the previous Demblin ghetto, there only remained the Jewish police and the Judenrat. Their task was to gather up the dead bodies and conduct the Germans through the empty Jewish homes to show them what were the supposedly hidden things of value. In the locale of the former Jewish bank, they gathered together all the Jewish possessions that had lasted until the second deportation.

After a few days, they put the Jewish police and Judenrat in three camps. After a little while, they liquidated two camps. The only one that remained at that point was the one at the airfield. There, they had a thousand Jews until the 22nd of July, 1944. With the approach of the Red Army, they led the camp workers out and sent them to Czenstechov, to the ammunition factory, Warta. There they

worked in very strenuous, difficult conditions, until December of 1944. After that, they took some of the Jews to Buchenwald. The 5th of January, 1945, they took out another group of Jews and sent them to Germany. A small group of the Demblin Jews, about 300 or 400, who worked in the camps Warta and Rakov, remained in Czenstechov, because the Germans didn't have time to evacuate them. The Jews were liberated by the Soviet Army.

The Christian population had a terrible attitude towards the Jews during the years of the occupation. They also had a terrible attitude after the liberation.

There wasn't any organized Jewish uprising. The majority of the Jews from Demblin perished in the concentration camps. About 600 Jews survived. Of that, a small number returned from Russia where they had fled in 1939.

Of the outstanding personalities in the city, I was acquainted with the first president of the Judenrat in 1939, Leizor Teichman. He was 44 years old at that time, someone who had done a lot in the community even before the War. He always tried to serve the Jewish people of Demblin, with the help of his secretary, the lawyer, Kannaryenfogel, who was 40 years old. They did the best that they could to help. That did not please the Germans, and in 1940, they took them to the town of Vonvolnitz, near Pulaw, and murdered them there.

Dr. Konshtern was known in the city as the philanthropist and someone who was involved in doing social work. In the beginning of the War in 1939, he went to Russia and lived in the Ukraine, but when the Germans invaded Russia in 1941, he was able to return to Demblin. But the Poles squealed on him to the German Police.

Dr. Yarmeyohu Vanapol was also known as someone who did a lot for the community. The Poles accused him of espionage and sent him to the concentration camp at Kartuz-Bereza. When the Germans entered Kartuz-Bereza they killed him and his wife, who was with him, as one of their first acts.

Ansbach City, Interviewer: L. Henig, November 22, 1947 --- Chairman of the Historical Commission: A. Kostetzky

4. THE STORY OF WOLF ROZENSON

The Jewish community in Demblin existed for many hundreds of years. Until the War there were 6,000 families living there and most of them lived from business. The religious community didn't have its own building but conducted its affairs in the house of a Jew. There was a study house, a yeshiva, a cemetery, a free clinic, a bank, free loan service, professional association and craftsman association. There were also various Zionist groups, revisionists and the other Zionists.

Almost all of the Jews at the outbreak of the War remained in the town. As the second biggest airport in Poland was found in Demblin, the city was heavily and often bombarded.

The 12th of September, 1939 the Germans came into town, into Demblin. Their first action was to grab Jews and make them go to forced labor at the airfield, at the fortress, to fix the highway and clean the streets. On Yom Kippur, they gathered the Jewish men, women and children at the airfield, and ordered them to dance and work. In the evening, they sent everybody home.

The Germans demanded repeated monetary and property tributes from the Jewish population. In the year 1940 (or 1941) they confiscated 2 big Jewish iron businesses. In the beginning of 1941, the ghetto was founded, 3 narrow streets at the end of the town. They made people go there and allowed them only to carry hand baggage. Afterwards, the Judenrat was given the responsibility to provide the Germans with the most beautiful and the best furniture from the Jewish houses. While the Jews didn't dare to leave the ghetto, the Christians were allowed to go in and go out.

German soldiers would cut off half of a Jew's beard and then display him in a car through town. Afterwards, the Jews cut off the other half of the beard by themselves. At the end of 1940 they made Jews wear blue Stars of David on white arm bands. Forced labor began for the Jewish population as soon as the Germans came into town. In the camp of Plaschow, near Krakow, in October of 1941, they sent 12 Jews from Demblin. They were supported somewhat by the Judenrat.

The Jews of Demblin were deported to a second place because they brought in other Jews from Bobrownik into our town. There weren't any pogroms, executions, or any great acts of plunder. Then on the 6th of May, 1942 the first deportation occurred. Those who didn't get out of their houses quickly enough were shot on the spot, the others were taken out into the forest and shot there.

On the 14th of May, 1942, a transport of 1,500 to 2,000 Jews from Preschov, Czechoslovakia, came into Demblin carrying a lot of packages. They looked pretty well off because until they were sent to Poland their conditions weren't really that bad, they were relatively tolerable. They were forthwith sent to forced labor and at night they came back into the ghetto.

In October of 1942, the ghetto was liquidated. The Jews of Slovakia met the same fate that was also dealt out to the Jews who were brought into the Demblin ghetto after the first deportation. Those who were late and those who had tried to hide from the second deportation were taken out to a side street and were all shot there. And if the Germans didn't reach their quota of Jews who were supposed to be killed, they would even kill some Jews who had work cards and

who were employed in fairly important projects. The quota had to be filled. The only Jews who were left over were those who worked at the airport, in the fortress, at the train station and those who worked on the Vistula.

The deported Jews were ordered to leave all of their hand baggage at the place that they were gathered together and were promised that as soon as they arrived at their destination they'd get everything back. Of course, that never happened. The unfortunate ones were packed 120 to each cattle car. My wife, myself, and our 6 children succeeded in avoiding being deported because we had our work cards. In that action they were able to deport 2,000 people.

We remained at our work place until July of 1944, especially at the airport. After that, they sent some of the people to Maidanek and others to Czenstechov, at the ammunition factory. In that transport of 200 Jews, my own family was included. We traveled 50 people to a car, without eating and without water and upon arriving in Czenstechov they immediately shot 15 children up to the age of 13, and among them, my three children. They'd already prepared the graves before hand.

After about 3 days, another transport arrived from Demblin. They sent us all to forced labor in the ammunition factory. Those who were able to work to capacity weren't treated so badly, but those who could not do exactly what was expected of them, were beaten murderously. This was done by two S.S. men. When they got tired of beating people up, they had replacements.

We slept on wooden planks on the floor, covered with just a sack. The lice and fleas bit horribly, but there was nothing we could do about it.

With the approach of the Red Army towards Czenstechov, they evacuated us to Buchenwald, on the 12th of January, 1945. Afterwards, we were liberated by the Red Army.

As to the attitudes and behavior of the gentiles towards the Jewish population, it was very bad. In the camps, the Poles continually ratted on Jews. There wasn't any uprising or resistance among the Dembliner Jews.

Those who survived were about 100 people.

Among the outstanding people in our town I want to remember are Moshe Lichtenshtein, 53 years old. He was a pious Jew, a Torah scholar, very learned and he was killed during the first deportation to Sobibor, the 5th of May, 1942.

Ansbach-Mittelfranken, May 10, 1947 --- Interviewer: Hermann Aftergut

5. THE STORY OF SHLOMA VELT

He was born in 1903 in Kuzmeire. His profession was a tailor. He lives in Niv Olim, Ludendorf. He gave the following testimony about his surviving the ghetto. Demblin, Zjelichov, Czenstechov.

Before Rosh Hashanah, 1939, the Germans tore into Zjelichov. I, my wife, and two children had found ourselves all of a sudden in Zjelichov because of the terrible German bombardment of Demblin which was our place that we lived. The first day, the Germans gathered all the men together who they found in the city in the square. They surrounded us with machine guns, and we stood there for a very long time. Afterwards the German officer ordered that whoever had a weapon should give it up and if not they would be shot. We sat on the square with our eyes looking with great terror at the machine guns, which were right up against us, and wondering when we were going to be shot. When the Germans convinced themselves that there weren't any weapons around, they finally let us go home. On the second day, which was the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the same events were repeated, but on this occasion they communicated that all of those people who were from Demblin, had to go home. So they lined us up in rows of four and began to drive us in the direction of Demblin. You had to run the whole way and whoever stopped for whatever reason, was shot on the spot. As you can imagine, in that situation, many people were killed. Finally we arrived at Demblin. The Germans had ordered the creation of a Judenrat. Afterwards, the Germans demanded various tributes. The whole pattern of forced labor began. The Germans carried out furniture and other valuable objects from Jewish homes, which they took away in their cars. Thus began a chain of suffering and pain until the Autumn of 1940.

At that time, the Germans ordered that all Jews had to come together in one area which they designated. They also brought Jews there from Ryki, Zvolein and other places. As a result of this in gathering, the conditions became extremely overcrowded. We lived several families to a room. The same problem was felt as far as what we had to eat. Someone who had a craft, a skilled workman, could earn a little bit and could sell a little bit on the black market, but everybody else was condemned to hunger. I used to work at several different jobs, and of course in the process I had to put up with all sorts of sorrow and beatings. People would often die in all kinds of circumstances. For whatever reason, if somebody wasn't able to show up at his job, they simply shot him. Others went to work to what were lakes. There, at these places, Jews had to put up with incredible amounts of abuse and torture. If in the slightest way a German's order wasn't carried out to the last detail, people would just be shot immediately. People used to be killed often at the railroad. There, the Germans would catch Jews who were riding on a train illegally and they had already prepared a special little three-walled iron cubby hole. The Jews that they took off the train were taken right to that place and that was the place that they shot them. Those kinds of things happened everyday. So it went until the 6th of May, 1942.

On the night of the 5th of May, 1942, we saw that it was light in the rooms of the Judenrat office and that the people that were working there were very occupied and very busy writing lists. We understood that something was going to happen and happen very soon. But we didn't know exactly what. Something

momentous. The whole night the ghetto was extremely restless and fearful. In the morning, the 6th of May, they ordered everyone out into the street. The Germans, the Ukrainians, and the Jewish police drove everybody together, ran around, beat people, and got them out of their houses. In the street they lined up the Jews in rows. I could see from the distance how the people who were working who were members of the Judenrat would select out to one side their own wives, children and friends. I was able to turn to an acquaintance who was a Jewish policeman to persuade him to get my wife and children into that group that had been put to the side. He did what I asked him to do and led them into that group. I myself went to the group which was the biggest group of people who were being gathered together. Standing there, a Polish acquaintance came to me and said that I should hide myself because there were going to be a number of Jews who were going to remain. At that point I tried to get over to the second group where those would be allowed to stay, and I was able to do that. The whole group was kept from 9 in the morning until 5 in the afternoon. At that point they began to drive the big central group of people to the trains. On the way the Ukrainian murderers spared no blows. During that process, 500 people were killed.

The Poles were standing by and seemed to be in a very happy mood, celebrating the whole thing.

When the transport left they ordered all those that had remained to go home. On the second day, the 7th of May, a deportation arrived from Ryki. They drove those people through Demblin. When the Jews from Ryki were driven through town, 62 people fell. They ordered that 20 men from the ghetto should bury corpses in the cemetery at Bobrownik. Afterwards, the young men who were on that detail said that many of the Jews were still alive and the Poles had ripped the clothes off their bodies.

When they led the Jews out of our ghetto, the ones that remained wanted very badly to know what they were going to do with us. In order to be more sure, we tried to ask what was happening. We asked various Poles. We didn't just ask one person, because you're never sure what that person's attitude was going to be.

Also, one of the Poles returned and reported about the Jews who were sent to Sobibor. He said that there he stood around and saw how the Jews were led in to the camp where there were only very few barracks to house them. Because he was interested in what was going to become of so many people with so few barracks he went up to a Pole there who was working not far from the camp and he asked him what was going on. He was told that when they brought the Jews in they said to them that they were going to go take a bath first of all. Everybody was handed a little washcloth and a little bit of soap and they led them into the bathing chamber, and shut the door. After that he heard horrible screams. Afterwards everything became still. Then, the same thing would be repeated with

another group. A second Pole came back and said that they were just taking all those Jews to the Ukraine to work. We believed the second person because we thought that what the first person said was just because he was an anti-Semite and he felt like telling lies that were ugly lies. Of course, to our great sorrow, we learned that it was the first person who was telling the truth. All the Jews from our neighborhood who were taken from our district went to Sobibor.

Those who survived in the ghetto were ordered to go to work. Twelve days later, they brought a transport of Jews from Slovakia, about 2,200 people. The Germans didn't spare any kind of sadistic behaviors. The German S.S. people used to come into the ghetto and simply as a past time for their enjoyment, beat up Jews. We used to often get money together so we could bribe the S.S. people not to torture Jews. The money used to be passed on through the intervention of the president of the Judenrat, Drabfish, who took all the money for himself. He also used to distinguish himself with the various tortures that he would inflict upon the Jews.

That's how our sorrowful days were taken up. We were employed at various tasks in the camp, which was created at that time, or in German agricultural work which was directed by an S.S. man, Engineer Ringel. In the camp at Demblin, there was a punishment chamber for Jews which was the domain of the Pole Ivaskavitch who with his very own hands, killed hundreds of Jews.

The 15th of October, 1942, the second deportation from the ghetto took place. On that day, the commandant of the criminal police, a Pole, with machine guns, shot Jews. Several hundred people died in that way. On the same day, the Engineer Ringel sent a Christian woman from the work place that he was operating. He directed her to get a hold of me and my family and some other acquaintances. He said there was going to be a deportation, and that we should come to him (I already knew him because I had often sewed clothes for him). We immediately went to him at the agriculture field that he was operating. Other Jews came as well. The Engineer Ringel accommodated everybody. It's because of that, thanks to him, many Jews were saved. At night I was able to get a hold of a folksdeutche and with him went into the ghetto to see what had happened.

The first thing that I did when I went into the ghetto was to take a look at the offices of the Judenrat because it was still light in there. I came upon something that was very strange. In every corner, there were drunken policemen and members of the Judenrat. I asked them, "What's going on here. They're killing hundreds of Jews and you're drinking?" They answered me, "Tomorrow they're going to shoot us too, so let's get drunk." From there I went to my dwelling. As I approached I saw spread out on the threshold, a woman and her child, the brains shot out and the walls sprinkled with blood.

8. THE GREAT MIRACLE OF THE LITTLE FEGALA FEINKIND - RELATED BY TZ. TZIMRAVITCH

It was the time of the big round-ups in 1942 when the German villains brutally murdered and tortured Polish Jewry. On a beautiful fall afternoon, the 29th of October, 1942, when the remaining surviving Dembliner Jews, those who had survived the two previous round-ups, were pushed together by the S.S. and the police into rail cars. A murderous Polish hand helped in the extermination. A gentile woman gave a small Jewish girl, about 2 years old, whose name was Fela Feinkind (the little daughter of Moshe Feinkind and Chava, whose maiden name was Tzimravitch), who had been hidden for a great price. The Christian woman was being paid to hide the child, but gave her up to the police, and explained that this was a Jewish child and one should dispose of her the way one did with all the rest of the Jews.

Luckily, a good angel, in the person of a second Polish woman, happened to show up at that moment and she was the director of the Polish orphanage in Demblin "Kapitanove" Tomkievitch. She sized up what was happening immediately and she intervened with the chief of police, whose name was Lieutenant Rudolf, and said that one really couldn't be sure that in fact that was a Jewish child, and she suggested that the best way to handle the situation was to temporarily give this child to the priest and give him three weeks, during which time maybe he could get in touch with the parents or the relatives of the child because the child looked Polish, it didn't look Jewish. Meanwhile, she took the child in herself to the orphanage with the consent of the chief of the police and there the child stayed the whole three weeks.

However, this episode came to the attention of a second policeman, a folksdeutche, whose name was Edek, who was famous in the whole area for being a terrible sadist and brute. He had hundreds of victims on his conscience. He rubbed his hands in sadistic glee with the thought he would soon shoot the blond, Jewish child. But his devilish plan didn't work out. He, with great impatience, demanded that the truth of this matter be established. He decided to research the matter directly with the child. After the three weeks were up, he went to the priest and found out that nobody had come forth to claim the child. He took the child outside of the orphanage, at that point, since they couldn't find this child's parents, in order to shoot her. But first, just to make sure, he spoke to her first in German, then in Polish, and then in Yiddish, to see if he could get some clue as to her origins. But the child, sensing the tremendous danger, didn't say a word to him and didn't betray herself in anyway. This just made him crazy with rage, and he whipped out his revolver and shot. But, to his great astonishment, the gun didn't go off. At this point, the employees and the director of the orphanage were standing around and watched as the second time he pulled the trigger, nothing happened. Then the devil himself began to realize, and said with great bitterness that if the revolver wouldn't work for the third time it had to be a sign that this child was destined to live. The third time he shot and the revolver wouldn't work. That was it, he left.

In that manner, the little Fela Feinkind was saved from his murderous hands and remained in the Dembliner orphanage, known as Krisha Irenska, until the liberation.

The day of the liberation arrived. The few Dembliner Jews who through some miracle or another were able to survive returned to their old homes with the hope of finding somebody who was close to them. The relatives of little Fegala still had some hope that she hadn't been lost. After long and difficult research and looking around, they succeeded in locating her at Kapitanove Tomkievitch, this woman who ran the orphanage. She said, "If you won't tell me what happened to the child's mother, I'm not going to tell you anything."

The head of the orphanage was very surprised to learn that a few days before, during the same great action in Sobolev, a little town near Warsaw, the mother of the child was hiding with her two children in an attic. Through an accident she was able to give her two other children to a Christian acquaintance who sent them away. This woman had been sent by her brother Tzadek Tzimravitch to save the children and bring them back to Demblin. But, the woman herself [the mother] couldn't be saved in this situation and she had to remain there in this attic. Being utterly hopeless, just totally broken and terrified, she went crazy and remained there in that attic until the villains discovered that she was there and ordered her to come down. She wouldn't obey. They set the house on fire. They told her to jump out of the attic. As she jumped into the flames, they shot her.

After hearing this, the director of the orphanage said, "Now I understand what happened on a certain summer evening. I was taking a walk with the children from the orphanage, in a field. The sun was going down and it was extremely red. Suddenly, little Krisha stopped in her tracks, looking very intensely at the redness of the sun. She couldn't take her eyes off the sun, as it was burning red and she screamed, 'Look! There, there, a house is burning, and my mother is jumping from the attic into the fire. Now, they shot her, my mother isn't alive anymore!' And she wouldn't leave the field until the sun had set completely and the redness had completely disappeared from the horizon."

That's how our children, not having any developed intellect, all felt together and saw their little fantasy. With such events there were many people who died and very few had the happiness to remain alive.

Among the few children who survived Hitler's hell was little Fela Feinkind, thanks to the intervention of the Jewish orphanage in Lodz who saved her from Christian hands and who lives today among Jewish children. She's now 6 years old, but no longer is she Krisha Irenska, but once again she's Faigela Feinkind. As she herself explained, she is ready to travel to Israel with a lot of other children.

Witness: Tzepporah Mandelboim --- Received by the Historical Commission on June 20, 1947 in Geiselhoring. Yad Vashem file no. 1372/1432.

THE FIRST PASSOVER IN THE CAMP OF DEMBLIN

BY S. PERELMUTER

A month before Passover, 1943, a group of religious Jews approached Mr. Venkart (the director of the Jewish camp in Demblin) with a request to allow the Orthodox Jews to eat kosher food in the coming Passover. Mr. Venkart promised to look into it.

A few days later, Venkart gave the delegation this answer to the proposal: to eat kosher food during the eight days of the holiday (one liter for every portion a day). But he conditioned, that every Jew that wants to enjoy these portions must sign up and pay 120 zlotys. This list with the money needed to be delivered two weeks before the holiday.

A committee was established. It was headed by Mr. Avraham Fiedfabel, Moshe Rozen and Yosef Shildekroit, may God avenge his blood. They took it upon themselves the responsibility to collect the money and to make sure that, God forbid, there will not be even one religious Jew that will stay without kosher food because of financial problems. But as luck would have it, some Jews overpaid and thanks to them, it was possible to get the kosher food for all on Passover.

About two weeks before the holiday the list with the 80 names and the money was presented to Mr. Venkart and he promised to arrange a kosher kitchen and to prepare potatoes, onion and margarine.

A week before the holiday, I and my very best friend, Yosef Shildkroit, may God avenge his blood, were called to Mr. Venkart. He told us that all the necessities were already in his hands and the kitchen was fixed and arranged. Because it was decided to make us responsible for the kitchen, the food preparation and its distribution to the assigned people, he would release us for 10 days (2 days before the holiday and the eight days of the holiday) from work in the airport but he asked us to prepare the kitchen, after our work day, for the kitchen to be ready for Passover.

He walked with us to the end of the cabin of the guards (*comendiatora*), there stood a structure by the size of 9x9 square feet that in its north corner was the cooking oven by the size of 140x1, but because there was no room for storage, we were promised that every evening after handing out the food we would get the supply for the next day. They ordered for us a new pot that could accommodate eighty portions and also a pan and red beets to cook soup for the four cups.

Two days before the holiday we were busy baking matzos on the oven for the Jews, that succeeded to get 2 1/2 kilos of flour, but we also succeeded to arrange that every assigned Jew got at least three matzos.

In the morning of the eve of the holiday we prepared the beet soup, but the main dish was cooked in the afternoon. We were very anxious for the taste of the festive food.

In the evening after the evening prayer, the crowd gathered in a special cabin to have the "seder". At the head of the table sat Layrish Bigelman, Moshe Rozen and Ahron Meir Eidelman of blessed memory (the last one was a distinguished scholar from the Kotzak Hasids that came from Pulaw to our camp. On Passover, 1945, while staying in Buchenwald, he lived on one potato a day, and when he was told that eating chametz isn't like being killed and not to transgress he answered that anyway his verdict was to die in the camp on Passover, therefore it was better to appear pure before God. And he really died the last day of Passover in Buchenwald).

Around the table sat all the assigned ones to eat the kosher food and following them sat the rest of the public. Rabbi Layrish Bigelman made the blessing on a cup of beet soup and the director of the camp, Mr. Venkart, was honored to sing the four questions, and after that the whole crowd shouted "We were slaves!" and burst into a bitter cry. When the time came to say *Vhie Sheamda*, Rabbi Ahron Meir read with a strong emphasis: "For more than once have they risen against us to destroy us, in every generation they rise against us and seek our destruction, but the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hands."

The people felt some of a relief as they were promised a promise that certainly would be fulfilled.

Late at night, this very special seder was over and the kitchen functioned during all eight days of the holiday.

Every morning for the eight days of the holiday, just before being called to work, they handed out the food portions and in the evening after work the hot kosher soup was distributed.

THE DESTRUCTION OF MY HOMETOWN

BY CHAYA SHILDKROIT

When war broke out, the first bombs fell on the airfield. We had to run away to Ryki. The German airplanes spent several days, they used to fly down very low, and shoot the population and half of Ryki was burned to the ground.

We made our way to the edge of the city and hid there behind the wall of the mill, near a little village, and there we remained, covered with our coats. We didn't have anything else. We weren't able to move out of there, because on the other side of the town everything was burned down. We made our last confessions because we really believed that we'd never get out of there alive.

Then, in the early evening, we left and went to another village, 12 kilometers away, and we spent 10 days there. Afterwards, we went back to Demblin, where the Germans were already in control.

We were in the ghetto until the first deportation. And understand that we weren't eating honey there. Before the round-up, we had been going to labor everyday. During the first round-up, I came with my family to the market place.

We stood there, four in a row, and the gendarmes and the Judenrat picked out people they thought were capable of working and also for other kinds of jobs that they had. Thanks to them, I was allowed to remain. But everybody else was sent away.

At the second round-up, myself and my dear husband were sent to work at the rail station. And understand, that this was done with the help of the Judenrat.

A couple days later, the word started to go around that there was going to be another round-up, and we were called once again to the market place. I went with my two daughters, the middle one and the youngest one. My oldest daughter was employed in agricultural work. My husband and son were working at the train station.

From the market place on the Warshavsky highway, I told my children that they had to run away. They were very young - one was 9 years old and the second was not quite 5. I wanted my 9 year old to run out of the line, but she didn't want to go by herself. But it wasn't possible for me to run away with two little kids. Afterwards she did agree, that I with the little one, would run away first, and that she would follow. And that's what I did finally.

I ran to a Christian acquaintance with my child, and he told me to go up to the attic. Meanwhile, a Jewish woman followed me, she ran after me. They ran after her with a gun. I thought they were running after me. And I went back to the highway and back into the line and got my 9 year old daughter. I found her, and we covered our heads with scarves, so that we wouldn't be recognized and I begged her, I told her, I asked her, that as soon as we begin to run, she should start to run immediately because I couldn't do that right away and I gave her my word that as soon as I got the chance, I would run after her.

Finally, she obeyed me, and ran. But to whatever gentile she went, she was driven away. "Get out of here, you dirty little Jew!". That's what they told her everywhere. She went to a field, found a hole, and hid herself there.

When I ran away again with my five year old child, a Jewish woman followed me again. We were three lost souls. I found a Christian and asked him to hide us until night. He refused. I offered to pay him very well and he said to go into the field, where there was a little wooden shack and that's where we all hid. We went in there, and sitting there, I saw, between a crack in the wall, that my other daughter, Andzya, was out there in the field. I called her a few times, and then she finally came closer, and finally all four of us were together.

The gentile told us, he promised, that when it got dark, he would take us into the town, because we'd heard there were 200 Jews remaining there and we wanted to be with them.

Meanwhile, while we were sitting there in the shack, we heard a lot of shooting. And that night, the gentile came and suggested that if we paid him enough, he would lead us into town. At first, the other woman would go with Andzya, my daughter. He said, myself and my little daughter should remain in a ditch and cover ourselves with boards. He said that he would come back and at a signal we would go with him.

He took us behind the city, near the sawmill. Afterwards, we went through the back streets and came to Barryl Sherman's. I knew that he worked for the gendarmerie and there would be some of the 200 Jews remaining there. And that was the case. When I arrived, my daughter, Andzya, and the woman, were already there, and also, Barryl, with his wife and child. There was a little candle burning. It was like we were sitting *Sheva*, waiting, for the night to end.

When dawn broke, I left my two children and I went to the place where they were doing the agricultural work, where my third daughter, Rashke, who was 11 years old, worked.

On the way there, a couple of wagons went by, and they were full of dead Jews, and they had been thrown in like herring, with the heads hanging down, and they were taking them out of the ghetto.

Not far from the work place there, I encountered Rashke. She ran out of the gate to me. The person who was the watchman made an exception for her, because he'd been a customer in my business. She was so happy to see me and she told me everything. And she said that she stood there by the gate, the whole night long, and begged to be let out, she didn't want to live at all if her parents were already dead, but the gentile watchman wouldn't let her go. And it's thanks to him, that she remained where she was supposed to there, because otherwise, she wouldn't be alive.

And after all of this sorrow and grief that we endured, a couple of days later, the word got around, they were going to make the city Judenrein. So what were we supposed to do now? A couple days before, with great, great effort, I sent my husband and son, Avrom, 7 years old, away and so now I was confronted with the great question, what was I supposed to do now?

When we came to the gate of the work place, I begged the watchman to hide us until we could get into the camp. Three days we stayed in the watchman's cellar. Until the people at the work place were able to let me in and get me some kind of written papers to make me legal so that we could remain in the camp.

There were 950 people in the Demblin camp. There were Jews from Budapest and from Austria, but the majority of them were Polish Jews. We worked there two years. After that, they sent us to Czenstechov. They took my little daughter away to shoot her with 30 other children. They were away for two days. Then, by some miracle, they returned them to us.

We worked there in the ammunition factory for a half a year. One day, before my liberation, they took my husband and my son away, to Buchenwald. They were there for five months, without eating practically anything, and working. When my son went among sick people, to find something from there that they had to eat, to nourish himself, they led out his father, Yechael, and his father's brother Yosef. My son remained in Buchenwald where the American army liberated him.

FROM DEMBLIN TO BERGEN-BELSEN

BY AHRON KATSHKA / KIBBUTZ NETZAR SIRNEY

In September of 1939 the Germans came into my town of Demblin. The murderers began to drag people off to forced labor. They got me as well. They took me to the station and ordered me to pick up little pieces of paper along the rail. In the process I got beaten plenty with a whip until I bled. Afterwards a train came from Warsaw. I said to my friend who worked with me we should run away but he didn't want to. It didn't take me very long to think about it and I ran. I ran in among the stocks of wheat or whatever was growing in the field. It seemed to me they were running after me, they were going to catch me any minute.

I arrived home out of breath. I couldn't even get a word out of my mouth.

Afterwards I told my parents about how they had beaten and tortured me.

Everyday they dragged us off to forced labor and in that process lots of Jews got shot. After that they ordered all the Jews to go into the ghetto and all of their possessions were plundered by the Poles.

The 6th of May, 1942, the deportation of the ghetto happened. Early in the morning we heard shots from all sides. A crying arose, the crying of children. They knocked on our doors with their rifle butts. Some S.S. men came into the house with an order, we all had to show up at the market place. Imagine our terror. Our hearts were beating. My mother still wanted to give the children something to eat. But who could eat? My father said to the children that when they call you, tell you to do something, you have to go! I grew cold with fright. We held each other by the hand and went quickly to the market place. Everything in the house remained wide open for anybody.

The murderers screamed, "Hurry up, hurry up, run!"

I held my younger sister in my arms and very soon we were separated from our parents. I feel a blow on my head with a piece of iron. I fall unconscious on the ground.

When I come to, I looked around me and see absolutely no one of my family. I was 16 years old then. The S.S. started to beat me again and scream, "You young dog, you can still work."

From the distance I saw people being driven to the rail cars. My heart was bitter. Our family consisted of seven souls. Now I was the only one remaining with my only brother. I watched how the older people with their packs were pushed into

the cars. A hard rain began to fall then. We stood in the market place until it got dark. Afterwards the murderers gave an order that we should go home.

At the door of our house, I saw my brother. I was so happy to see him that I fainted. My brother calmed me down and comforted me and said that our parents would come back. Later though, they never did come back. Often then did I want to kill myself, but my dear brother always was there to comfort me.

And in this way some months passed. Life got worse. Suddenly we heard that there was going to be another deportation. My brother then was at work. I quickly ran out of my room and ran to the sawmill of Samson Rozenman, where I worked. There was a German foreman there by the name of Ulrich.

I went to the gate and an S.S. man screamed at me, "Stop!".

The foreman came out and told me to go inside. I remained there working but separated once again from my brother. I remained in the sawmill until they'd driven out the last Jew from the ghetto.

Afterwards they sent us to work again at the airfield where I found my brother. We had a very hard life in the camp at the airfield. There was lots and lots of hardship and sorrow, and I could never stop thinking about my parents.

In 1944 they sent again a transport of a couple of hundred Jews to Czenstechov, and I was among them. I kissed my brother good-bye and said, "Who knows if we'll ever see each other again".

My brother answered, "Keep hope alive!".

I was horribly, horribly broken by that experience. With tears in my eyes I had to part from my brother again. Very soon thereafter they drove us into the cars.

My arrival in the camp at Czenstechov was very sorrowful. The camp was surrounded by a wall. There was a weapons factory there. I went to work in the carpenter's shop. Life there was very harsh...

After a little while they brought another transport of Demblin Jews into the camp. Among them was my brother. We were very happy to see each other. He said to me, "Well, you see? You have to have hope. A human being can overcome anything, but you can never lose hope, even in the worse time."

Again we were together for a year.

A little bit later, the word went around they were going to send people away on a transport to Germany. On a dark night we suddenly heard the barking of dogs. The S.S. men opened the door and ordered, "Get up!"

They read from a list of people who had to go. They called my name as well. I said good-bye to my brother yet another time and said to him, "Now everything is lost, this is the end".

He said to me, "Remember your parents, you're going to survive".

They drove us into cold rail cars which were covered with thick snow. There wasn't anything to eat. We stuck our hands out through the windows to grab a little bit of snow but the watchman began to shoot at the windows.

In that condition we were traveling for several days to Buchenwald. There we remained a short time. Afterwards they sent us to Dachau. There were 80 thousand men there. One worked under a mountain. There was a bomb factory there. Everyday lots of people died. They would hang you for just a trifle. I am not capable of expressing what people had to suffer in that environment.

In the beginning of 1945, English planes began to fly overhead and bombard the military targets not far from the camp. We often would ask or pray, Oh boy, wouldn't it be great if a few of those bombs fell on us.

The front got closer to the camp. So they moved the inhabitants of the camp to Bergen-Belsen. They guarded us very closely in the rail cars. After a week's time we came out of the wagons of the rail cars. Many, many had died along the way. We were so weak when we were led into the camp. Whoever couldn't walk got shot right away. That was the beginning of April, 1945.

At night we heard fierce artillery bombardment. We said to each other that help was close by. In the meantime there wasn't anything to eat. We had a few old rotten ribs [from a cow] and divided them up and shared them with each other.

The whole time I thought about my brother who remained in Czenstechov. Would I be able to see him again?

I was very, very weak. Lying on the ground, I wasn't even able to move. A friend gave me a little bit of a rib and he just put it right in my mouth. He said that tomorrow in the morning, everybody would get a whole loaf of bread. We were lucky because a doctor didn't permit us to eat the bread because it had been poisoned.

A little bit later an English tank entered the camp. My friend who had saved me with a little bit of rib ran to me and screamed, "We're free".

He dragged me out of the barracks, but I wasn't even able to walk. Later on with a couple of other friends, they were able to take me out and I saw everything. We were starving. From the English men we received only very little to eat. In that way we lived after the liberation for about a year.

I started to think all the time about finding my brother. Once a friend said to me that he's going to travel to Poland and that he would look for my brother there, maybe he would find him. That's exactly what happened, he found my brother in Poland. After a few weeks my brother came to me and we traveled together to Israel.

Now I live in Kibbutz Netzar with my wife and children, and my brother with his children in Tel Aviv.

MY ROAD OF TORMENTS FROM DEMBLIN TO DACHAU

BY CHANA GOLDBERG / PARIS

1

When the War broke out, I and my children were in Garbatka. Every May we used to go there. With us were my sister-in-law Elkala and her children and Sarala with her children. We heard that the War was breaking out and we quickly went home.

In the morning, the 1st of September, when we went out into the courtyard of the sawmill, we saw the German armors flying overhead and immediately the bombs started to fall. From the city people began to run into the fields. I remember how my children, who only spoke Polish, heard Jews crying "*Shmah Yisrael*", and they asked what people meant by that, and who they were calling out to.

The next morning many Jews ran away to Ryki because we thought that where we lived there were a lot of military objectives for the bombing: the fortress, the airfield and barracks and then there was also the rail terminal. For all these reasons the town would be very heavily bombed. And so we thought that it was a good idea because we'd be more secure if we made our way to Ryki.

We made our way there at night on foot with packs and different things which we were able to carry with us. There was great turmoil in Ryki too. The Jews of Ryki with those of Demblin were running to the cemetery to hide there. German airplanes flew very low and began to shoot people down. People fell like flies.

We saw that it was also dangerous in Ryki and on wagons we made our way to Zjelechow. We were there for a little while until things got more quiet and we returned to Demblin. Everybody went back to their own house. We thought that things would be quiet now. The bandits had yet to show their real brutality. The ghetto was established in early 1940, although I don't remember the exact date of that.

Although the ghetto wasn't formally fenced off, we didn't dare to leave it. In the beginning one could make life a little easier with money, by buying food. We had to wear armbands with a Star of David. I left the ghetto very, very rarely. Christians were able to travel back and forth freely and they would bring food to sell. If we needed something, we were able to get it through the sawmill where we worked.

It didn't take very long before the sawmill was turned over to the Germans. We had forewarning that the sawmill should be signed over 90% in the name of Vadetskin, a Christian who was our partner. In this way the Germans paid

Vadetskin for everything that they took from the sawmill, they even installed a German to be the manager of the sawmill, but in fact the person who really ran the operation was my husband, Samson. I became just a simple worker, the children were also working there and we gave a lot to the Germans. In the sawmill the lame Hershel and Amrametsha Gelbart came in to work. That was before the deportation.

Once I went out without my armband and a German who recognized me as being Jewish, came over to me and said, "Where is your band of shame?". I was terrified and got a slap in the face. That was the first blow from a German.

Once a German went wild and came into the ghetto with a revolver and started to shoot into the houses. He made his way to the house of Chachkes. From there a granddaughter of Yisraelish made her way out and the German shot her on the spot. Then he came into the sawmill with his revolver in hand. Chava's sister was polishing the windows and he went over to her and shot her through the legs. I was very afraid. He began to chase our Moshe who was still working there at the time. Moshe ran. After that he started to run after me with his revolver in his hand. I was able to escape through an open storage space into a neighbors on Warshavsky street. I was able to hide myself there.

The German, who worked there with us at the sawmill, saw everything that had happened and saw to it that the girl was taken to the hospital. They put her leg in a plaster cast and she limped after that. The German was tried at Zalman Feldsher's (Vanapol) house. I was a witness and I told about everything that had happened. He was punished by being sent to the front.

When the War with Russia began they created the camps. In Demblin there were 4 camps. And meanwhile we still ourselves had not entered a camp.

2

During the second deportation they communicated that everybody who did not come out of their house and assemble at the market place would be shot. After that they made their way through the houses, sometimes they didn't even bother to go in and just shot inside. Near the synagogue they shot a lot of Jews and children in the side streets.

Even earlier something had happened near Hinye, the baker's house. He was a shoemaker, I don't remember what the man's name was. He had his wife and they were standing out with the cradle, and the child was lying there in the cradle and chewing on a little piece of bread and a German walked by and shot the child dead, in the cradle. The mother beat herself over the head, in great horror.

Once Ulrich, the German manager of the sawmill, came in and said, "Rozeman, somebody stole a strap (component from one of the cross saws) and the police said that if it isn't given back they're going to shoot Samson."

It was a miracle that the worker who had stolen this implement hadn't hidden it well and they found it.

Once they realized that the sawmill wasn't really Polish but in fact Jewish (maybe somebody had squealed), they called in Samson and they told him that they know that the sawmill doesn't belong to a Pole but that it really belongs to him and that all of the money that he might have gotten has to be given back and "if you don't pay it back in a couple of days, we're going to take you away to Lublin and shoot you there."

But, where were we supposed to get the money from? We'd sold everything, even a pair of my own shoes. We got loans from our acquaintances and we were able to pay.

3

During the first deportation people said that we didn't have to go out to the round-up because we worked at the sawmill. During the second round-up, Sara was outside and we were able to send word to her through a Christian. We were afraid to go out by ourselves. When she came back the watchman of the sawmill who was standing there by the gate wouldn't let her in. I asked him why he wouldn't let her in with her children and he answered that those were his orders, that nobody was supposed to be allowed in, that's what Ulrich had decided. I told him that wasn't his choice to make, to mind his own business, with force we were able to push him aside and take them in, and thanks to that she was saved with her children.

As it later came out the whole thing was a mistake in a way, we all had to leave the sawmill and go to the assembly point where the deportation was in progress. Meanwhile, Ulrich showed up, who noticed what was happening and he told the police that if they took away all of his workers he'd have to close the sawmill, "Without Rozeman the whole thing is going to fall apart, and he can't do it by himself certainly. He's the one who really knows how everything runs." They told him that he should chose those people who he needs and they would be able to go. He chose all of us except for Sara's 2 children and my 3 children and they were left behind. He insisted on keeping them apart and not letting them go back to the sawmill. "What, these kids are supposed to be actually working? They've got their certificates and everything? They're actually licensed to be workers in this sawmill? These are your workers? Nah, these kids are going to stay here and everybody else get out of here."

I wanted to leave with the complaint that if they send my children away I'm going to go with them. But Samson said to me, "I have a lot of Christian acquaintances at the sawmill and I swear to you that I'll do everything that I can to get the children back. If you go away then everything is finished. You along with the children. So let's try to get them back."

I came home and I cried and I wept. All of the children had been taken away. If only they'd just left me one child.

The firemen and the Ukrainians were involved in conducting the details of the deportation. Terri, the chief of the firefighters, was there and we sent to him an office worker, a young woman, the wife of an officer. Through her we communicated that he should help get the children out. Terri went to Ida and said to her, "Ida, come with me". She didn't want to go. She said, "No, you've got to take Izio too". And he took Izio too and he hid him behind his cloak and he walked with him to a soda water booth because he was afraid that the Poles would notice him leading around a Jewish child and he asked for some sweets. The office worker was already waiting there for Izio and took him home. Sara said, "I wish I'd just had one child."

Terri went back to Ida and told her to run. When she did that the Ukrainian aimed at her with his rifle but she was already gone and how she was able to get out of there is really a miracle.

We had a Christian person with us at the sawmill, a certain Beltshekovsky. He was a cousin of Vadetsky and this guy was the proprietor of a bakery and he was a very good friend. He would frequently buy wood from us and he used to say, "For Samson, I would do anything". And he used to come over and we used to eat and drink together.

When Ida found an appropriate moment when the Ukrainian wasn't looking, she grabbed Bultshen and began to run. She saw that she couldn't run to us because all of the streets were being watched by Germans and Ukrainians, so she went into Beltshekovsky's courtyard and asked him to let her hide there. She was 10 years old at the time and he chased her out. There in the courtyard, Sara's husband, Gropach, was already hiding out, lying down hidden, and saw everything.

The children had just left when the Ukrainians came into the courtyard. Finally the children, Hadassa and Gutken, came home.

During the third deportation we were able to hide the children once again. There was a carpenter who worked for us, Oshaka, and the children hid in his attic.

During the deportation we left the sawmill and went into one of the camps. Then at that point the city was emptied of Jews. There weren't any Jewish police anymore, all of them had entered the camps. The manager of the sawmill said to the assistant commander of the camp that Samson had worked very well and that they should give him an apartment of his own in the camp. There were little separate places in the camp for families. With money one was able to buy a little mercy from the camp commander. There were two camp commanders. One a German who lived outside the camp in a little house. And there was also an Austrian Jew by the name of Venkart. He didn't want to give us a separate place to live and we lived with everybody else. We were without any money in the camp. We thought that Vadetsky would send something into us. The children were with us.

We worked in the carpentry shop of the courtyard at the train station, assorting and laying lumber. Ulrich, the director of the sawmill, was conducting business here at the carpentry place as well. He took Jews to work in the workshop here and also to tend geese. Izio and Hadassa remained in the camp.

Once, somebody came into the carpentry shop and said that after we'd left for work they came into the camp and they grabbed the children, told them to lie down on the ground and not move and they thought at the time that they were going to be shot. They took us out of the place where we were working and took us to a room in the train station courtyard and they searched us, told us to take off all of our clothes, so we remained there, exactly how our mothers had brought us into the world. The S.S. men said to us that we shouldn't be ashamed, that they had wives. They looked in concealed places on our bodies and took everything, but that wasn't important. We just wanted to go home and see what had happened to our children and it was a miracle that the children were still there.

The worse hadn't yet come until we were taken to Czenstechov. Then they liquidated all of the camps. The camps at the fortress as well as at the station. They let all the Jews out and took them to Auschwitz or to Treblinka. The first groups had been taken to Sobibor. There they gassed them right away but in Auschwitz there remained still a few living human beings.

5

Once, a 6 year old little girl came who had run away from a deportation. She had been hiding in a hollowed out tree where she stayed as long as she could until she just couldn't stand the hunger anymore. She came to us in the camp, skin and bones, a skeleton. All the kids in the camp, about 50 of them, tried to take care of her. We gave her a bath. We got some clothes for her. We gave her something to eat. Meanwhile though, somebody apparently squealed. The

gendarmes came, took the child out of the camp and shot her. They said that Venkart didn't want to leave the child with us. I don't know that for sure because I wasn't actually there, so I won't lay this particular accusation against Venkart with any certainty.

A second time, Benyomin's daughter, Roma, came and wanted to get into the camp. But Venkart wouldn't let her in. He threatened to shoot her if she hung around outside the camp. It was just dusk before night, the police were standing around the gate. Venkart wouldn't let her in. (At that time Jews would arrive from various cities because our camp was the last place that remained in the whole area where there actually were Jews.)

And seeing that they wouldn't let her in, she noticed that near the camp there were some geese who were feeding. She took a stick and pretended that she was a little shepherdess. Two of the field police came up to her and asked her what she was doing. She answered them in Polish that she was taking care of the geese. They asked her again and she played the role very well that she didn't understand what they were talking about. They thought that she was a little Polish girl and they went away. She saved herself and she lives today in America. Later on they did indeed let her into the camp.

Before being sent away from the camp when they said that the Russians were already close to Demblin, we decided not to move. We knew what awaited us in the other camps. But Venkart had a camp full of enemies, his personal enemies, who'd been the victims of his chicanery, and he was afraid that they would take their revenge, and so he wanted that everybody should be taken away. He also of course had some good friends. For those who had provided him with money, and other nice things, he'd done favors. People who he'd been asked, "Why do we have to go with the Germans? Why don't you try to arrange things so that we don't have to go? We can stay here."

The camp was very badly guarded. A lot of people were really able to make their way out through the wires. They ran away into the forests and the A.K. (the Polish underground fighters) shot them there. Ali Feigenboim at that point escaped and stayed alive.

People said that Venkart went to the Germans and said to them that the Jews didn't want to stay and be there when the Russians arrived, but they wanted to go away with the Germans. There weren't any rail cars, he said. He said he was going to raise the money and that we had to give everything that we had so that we could get a hold of some rail cars. He already had quite a bit of money which he had robbed in one way or another from the Jews. And he continually threatened that anybody who was found with any money whatsoever was going to get shot. He gathered up all the money and pretended to give it to the

Germans. Sure he gave a little bit of it to them, but he probably kept quite a bit of it for himself. He paid so that we could be taken away.

So, they took us away to Czenstechov in cattle cars.

6

When we arrived at Czenstechov we still had a few things with us, pillows and blankets, different kinds of clothes, a few garments. They took everything from us and put us into barracks. The women separately, the men separately. At the beginning we didn't know that they had shot the children. When we found that out there was a great uproar. The children clung to their parents, they wanted to remain with their mothers. But, I said to Samson that he should take Izio. I stayed with Hadassa. She didn't want to go away from me. A Jewish policeman came to me and said, "Madam, send your children over to your husband." They didn't want to go, but Izio did go. Ida stuck something into her boots so that she seemed taller and they let her go through with me. She was already pretty big, about 14 years old. But Hadassa, they took away to shoot.

They took them in an unfinished house where there were neither doors nor windows. I ran in after them. I grabbed Hadassa and I carried her out. A policeman noticed this and he took her out of my arms and took her back, "Madam, I don't want to get shot. They already counted the children, and if there are any children missing, they are going to shoot me."

Also they sent people from our camp [Demblin], a thousand Jews, from Ryki, Gniewoszow, Lublin. They counted us into 2 groups, 500 each, and they transported us to Czenstechov. That was in 1944. At night we heard shooting. The people said the Russians were already at Lublin. Everywhere that the Russians approached, the Germans sent the people away from the camps. They did the same thing in Germany, they moved people deeper into the country. Among the 500 people were 15 children who they immediately shot upon their arrival at Czenstechov.

The Jewish police told us that the S.S. men ordered graves to be dug and they put the kids in the graves and Botsheon, the shoemaker's son, who was about 8 or 10 years old, picked up stones and threw them at the S.S. Also Leb Burshtein's child was shot and the 4 children of Yosel Chaim-Ahron's daughter.

We turned the world over to try and save the children. There was a camp commander there from Skarzshetz, a scoundrel. It was said that during the roll calls at Skarzshetz, everyday he would select from the rows of people the most beautiful young woman and then he would carouse, inviting all of the S.S. men in, all of whom would rape her, after that they'd shoot her, then they would send her

clothes back to her mother. That's how he conducted himself in Skarzshetz. In Czenstechov he wasn't doing that kind of stuff anymore.

Finally we got the children back and they didn't shoot them.

I worked with bullets. Once at night I kind of drifted off during work and right away the overseer came up and slapped me around. In the morning he made me stand and wait even though my legs were about to bend beneath me and I had to stay there the whole day and look at the water. I didn't dare move my head. Somebody was standing right next to me watching me with a rifle.

Meanwhile Samson tried very hard to come to us so that we could all be together.

7

Once, early in the morning, they said to us that we should get dressed and leave the little children behind because we were going to go out and dig giant trenches. To us it didn't really matter what kind of work we were doing. We were taken to another camp where there was an assembly point. I was with Hadassa and Ida. From there they wanted to send us to Radomsk to dig these big trenches against tanks, 6 meters deep. Ida went with me, but they wouldn't let Hadassa go. I'll never forget that scene. I prayed they would let me take Hadassa with me. I begged them, I said she could do the work. But the S.S. man pulled out his revolver and said, "Say another word and you're dead. I'm going to shoot you." Mothers had to leave their children, we didn't know if we'd ever see them again. Hadassa threw herself down on the ground and said, "Mommy, where are you going to leave me?" When I remember that scene I always have to cry. We had to travel away and I had a very, very hard time.

We had a quota at work and it was extremely hot, unbearably so. During the whole time when I was working there, I didn't know anything about what had happened to Hadassa. Only after finishing the work, when we came back to Czenstechov to the camp, I found her there again. Samson also came back. The Jewish camp commander, Tabasa, told us that we were going to go back to the same bitter camp.

Once a boy sneaked out of the camp and ran away, he was 18 years old. The Germans lined everybody up and said that instead of the one who had run away they were going to shoot two Jews. They took a Jew off to shoot him but the revolver malfunctioned and it wouldn't shoot. The Jew begged, "You see, it's already fated that I'm supposed to live, so let me go." The end is that they didn't shoot him. But they did what they wanted to do. They didn't need any outside orders from anybody. They did whatever they wanted to do by their own hand. They also could have saved thousands of people.

We were there for a little while and they sent us to Germany, to Bergen-Belsen. There a typhus epidemic broke out and people died like flies. That was in January of 1945. It was a very cold bitter frost. I didn't see Hadassa anymore after that. Samson, with Izio, was sent away to Buchenwald. Hadassa was liberated in Czenstechov. They had an order to clear out the camp of people, but they didn't have a chance to carry it out.

8

When we arrived at Bergen-Belsen they took us immediately to a bath and took all of our things. We saw through the open door that men were actually bathing. We had the idea that when you are taken to a bath you're going to a gas chamber, but in fact these people were actually washing themselves. From the ceiling there was a very slow dripping of water. So you could say, if you wanted to stretch it, the people were taking a bath of some kind. When they let us out in the corridor, there were S.S. people standing there with rubber hoses and they poured cold water over us. And then they gave us clothes to put on. For a big person they made sure to give that person clothes that were very small and tight, and for a small person the opposite, clothes that would hang all the way down to your feet. We didn't get any socks, we didn't get any shirts. The shoes didn't fit anybody and then they led us through the streets, our hair froze and there were icicles hanging down from our hair.

After that they took us into a big structure with a stone floor and that was covered with a little bit of straw (there was a dead person lying under the straw). We were pressed together like herring, I don't remember how many people there really were there. I met a doctor from Rakov who was with Samson and Izio, she knew them and I was very happy with this news, to know that they were still alive. I learned from her that all the people from the former camp had been taken to Buchenwald. There were many political prisoners of various nationalities, including Germans, and they had done everything they could to help the children in their midst. In Buchenwald there were 800 children and they were all liberated.

In Bergen-Belsen it was particularly horrible during the roll calls. They took us out in the worse of the cold and we were almost naked, they had us stand there for hours and hours. Everybody was trembling from the cold, Ida stood next to me and cried. I was able to sew together something from rags, something to put around her feet, but she wasn't able to put on her shoes. Two women had to, as punishment, stay outside on their knees the whole day. People were falling like flies in this environment.

Everybody asked to be sent to work in order to have something to eat. We received only 100 grams of bread and a little bit of potato soup, that was about as much as a half a spoonful. Ida went into the kitchen to work a few times. They

cooked rape there but they told people that if any of that rape got stolen, the person who did the stealing would get shot.

Women used to carry buckets of excrement from the outhouses into the fields and the rape used to grow in the fields and the women used to steal it on these little excursions, because if you had some you could actually live on it for a few days. Meanwhile the S.S. man saw this going on, saw the rape being stolen from the distance and the women threw the rape into the bucket of shit. The S.S. man made them kneel down and beat them on the neck with a stick. How they were able to endure it, I can't understand.

9

There's a lot to say about Bergen-Belsen and it's not possible to tell all of it. There were two young girls from Czechoslovakia there and they were real bandits. They used to say really vicious things about us, the Polish Jews, and they would steal stuff to eat and then sell it, sell it that is to anybody who still had a little ring on their finger or some other valuable. And in fact they were actually in cahoots with the S.S. overseers.

After that they sent out of Bergen-Belsen 500 women. Ida and myself were among them. We thanked God that we were getting out of there. They kept us traveling for 10 days. They gave us a loaf of bread for the journey, but we were so hungry that we ate it the first day and so we were hungry for the next 9 and we didn't have anything to eat.

One of our guards, an S.S. man, used to get off at every station and make his little meal. He brought potatoes with him and pig fat. We watched this and it was absolutely unbearable. When he went away for a few minutes we ate up his potato. When he came back he saw what had happened, his potatoes weren't there anymore. He used to cook stuff over this portable oven that he had. We used to peel his potatoes for him and then bake the potatoes for him on the grill of the little stove. It burned our mouths to eat these potato peels. The stolen potatoes were eaten by all 50 women in the car, that is to say everybody got a little bit of the potatoes.

The S.S. man got a whip and beat every woman until she was blue with welts. After that two women at a station not far away, as soon as he disappeared for a moment, fled, and they were able to save themselves and to survive the War.

There was a girl from Lodz traveling with us. She was the daughter of a Rabbi. She was extremely intelligent and knowledgeable. She said that she would go and tell them about what had happened. He after all had to provide his human cargo, he used to call each of us a "shtick". However, he was missing two "schticks".

When we arrived at our destination, they counted us and there were two missing. They asked the S.S. men where they were. At this point the young woman from Lodz went to the commander and said to him, "Herr Ebershturemfuhrer, I want to tell you just exactly how these two ran away. When he went looking for something to eat and we weren't given anything to eat, he left us alone and they took off."

On the spot, the S.S. man got two slaps across the face and had his epaulets ripped off. So we got at least a little bit of satisfaction.

10

The place that we arrived at was called Burghauz. There was a typhus epidemic going on there and Ida got it.

I asked the female camp director if she could send me to work in town, in the nearby village, because after all you could always get something off a farmer, a potato, an onion, something to bring back. She gave me a hard slap across the face for the chutzpah of even suggesting that I have the privilege of work.

The camp in Burghauz was horrible. Nothing to eat, dirty, full of lice. One girl got kanker ulcers that were spreading all over her body. I saw what was happening to her and I knew that if they discovered that somebody had something that was contagious they'd shoot them immediately. I had some little scissors with me, I don't know where I got it. I took her to a place where there wasn't anybody around and I cut her hair and that helped her a little bit, it helped heal up the sores a little bit. After the War I met her again.

Ida had typhus in her insides, in her belly, everyday I received her portion of bread and I cooked it and made bread soup out of it and brought it to her. She lay in a barrack which had little tiny windows up towards the ceiling, like it was a pig stall. They said to me that she might last for another night.

Afterwards they took all of the sick people and took them away to Tyrkhaym. Ida told me that she didn't want to go. We, the healthy ones, were taken to Dachau and Ida went with us. Those who in fact did go to Tyrkhaym, did burn.

We were at this point walking in special striped clothes and when the American airplanes flew low they saw us and they did not shoot. The S.S. people hid themselves among us so that they wouldn't be recognized. We didn't have anything to eat, nor at that point did the S.S. because everything at this point was already chaotic. This though was before the liberation. The next morning we were liberated.

Ida fell, she just didn't have anymore strength to keep going. We picked her up and put her on a wagon. We said just as long as we could get her into the town, that was the important thing, because there she would be able to get something to eat.

We went on foot. Shmuel Konen's daughter snuck away from the group and went to a German's house but she heard in the background, that somebody else said that they should go and call the police on the telephone so that they could come and take her away. She got out of there fast and hid in the forest. She told me all this after the War.

Those among us in this group who fell along the way, they took to Dachau to burn. We came to Nalach, 5 kilometers from Dachau, which was actually part of the camp itself. They had wanted to send us away to Teyrol to shoot us there, they'd already sent one transport of 500 women there, but they just didn't have time to get it together with us.

The S.S. people led us into the camp and then scattered to hide themselves. German boys or whoever had the weapons, started to bombard the camp. A doctor was shot on the spot. There was pandemonium and everybody began running. We had just come into the camp and we just didn't know which was the right way to run. But there were Poles there who apparently were political prisoners and they seemed to look in relatively good shape to us, and they grabbed us by the hand and took us to the bunkers.

11

In the morning they liberated us. They wouldn't let us go out of the camp because the Americans said the woods were still full of the S.S. and they'd shoot us if they got the chance. The same day the S.S. people came to us and asked that we hide them. We gave them to the Americans. But the Americans did not shoot them.

Ida told me about what went on in Dachau proper. When she arrived there the ovens were burning ceaselessly. They burned people. But they didn't have a chance to burn everybody. The Heftlingen saw that the liberation was near and when they could they would grab the S.S. guys, lay them out, grab their weapons and shoot them when they got the chance.

Ida was sick and wasn't able to walk, and a Pole came to her and said, "Come on, we're going to give you a little towel and you can take a bath." She knew that when you said bath, it meant you were going to get sent right into the ovens. She said she wouldn't go. They said to her, "Panyenka, don't be afraid, we are Poles after all, and we're not Germans and we're not going to do anything to you."

Finally she did what she was asked, and she was filthy, covered with lice, she was as skinny as a bone. She went in there and she washed herself. After that they took her and brought her to a place where there were women who had been prostitutes for the S.S. By this time there weren't any S.S. around. This was a day before the liberation. That's the spot where she was liberated.

Now we were all in different places. One didn't know the fate of the other.

Where I was, there was a young girl from Czechoslovakia, very beautiful, she was sick with typhus. I took care of her. I gave her a little bit of bread when I could. Her mother wasn't there. About 6 weeks later Ida started to look for me and I got a little letter from her. At that point I simply couldn't wait any longer. The Americans wouldn't let us go and they would shoot in the air if they thought we were trying to escape. But I left. Ida was just 6 kilometers away and I found her outside. By that time she was already well dressed. And she prepared a little dress for me. There was kind of a room where they had the clothes of the people that had been murdered. It was very, very, very big and you couldn't even see the end of it. And there people went and picked out something to get dressed in.

When I was taking care of this young girl from Czechoslovakia, I thought to myself, as my Ida was motherless at that point and she was alone and she was sick, maybe somebody would take care of her. And that's exactly what happened. As a matter of fact, the person who took care of Ida was the mother of the girl from Czechoslovakia. She took care of Ida. She couldn't wait and she went back to Czechoslovakia.

We were there a little bit longer and they sent us to Freiman. There we met people who had been in many different camps. As usual we heard about things that went on in all these different camps. One thing I simply can never forget, in one camp, I don't remember exactly which one, the S.S. ordered that little stakes be made with sharp points at their ends, the kinds that you used in gardens. Not thick ones, but very sharply pointed. Then they forced people to take these stakes into their mouths and with a hammer they'd smash them in and they'd murder people that way.

Izio and Samson were together. They were in Buchenwald. I didn't know anything about them, but just a little bit later I heard that all of the men had been taken to Buchenwald. There Izio did everything he could to help his father. A woman wrote to me how Izio told her about what happened in the camp and what he had to do in order to get some food. He used to find a way to get out through the wire and make his way into the kitchen and somehow get a little bit of food there or he would shine the shoes of the S.S. men and get a little bit of bread from them.

To tell about Buchenwald is redundant. Everybody knows what kind of camp it was: hunger, brutal work, death camps. Moshe died there too. The story about him was that a block chief, a Pole, threw a big sack at him and beat him to death.

They took the last transport out and they knew that they were going to be taken to their death. Samson said that he would rather hide himself among the bunks, under some straw. If they found him, he hadn't lost anything, it was all the same, because he was waiting to die.

[See PHOTO-C52 at the end of Section C]

Samson became very sick, he was taken to the hospital. At that point he simply didn't have any more will to live. He said that since he'd already lost his whole family he had nothing to live for. And that's where he died. Izio remained alone. Hadassa remained in Czenstechov alone. The Jews of Demblin wanted him to come back to Demblin, but Izio didn't want to go.

Hadassa said to her father that if she remained alive she would go back to the sawmill. She came to Demblin and went to the sawmill. Teres came to her and said, "Halushia, get out of here, they know that nobody remained and they're going to kill you if you stick around here." At that time in Demblin, they had murdered the Luxemburgs, Shmuel Nacham's wife. They wanted to go back to their house and the Poles came at night and murdered them.

Teres apparently was himself a member of the A.K. and he knew they were getting ready to kill her, so Hadassa and company went away to Lublin. Poles with knives jumped them, wanted to kill them, but the Russians intervened and protected them. Afterwards they were sent to Reichenbach (Dzsherzshanuv). I learned that they were in Reichenbach and I traveled there and brought them home.

Izio was urged to go to Demblin and he said that he had an Aunt in Paris and he was going to go there. With the help of "Oza", he was able to come to Paris and I was in Landzberg. There was a free kitchen there. The Americans gave people a whole bunch of stuff to eat, all different kinds of conserves and fats, but it was not appropriate for people who were half starved and a lot of people gorged themselves and died. There wasn't really sufficient medical help either at that point. It was only a little bit later that they organized everything through "UNRA" [United Nations Relief Agency].

After that Izio came to us and he wanted to remain and he did not want to stay in Germany and he went back to Paris and thus, we all went to Paris.

FROM WARSAW GHETTO TO THE DEMBLIN CAMP

BY ESTHER APELBOIM (MEKLER)

A

During the outbreak of the War I lived in Warsaw. There in the ghetto, for a long time, I saw that if I wanted to remain alive I had to get out, because remaining there would be certain death. Hundreds of people died of hunger by the day. I felt I simply couldn't bear to endure that hunger and I decided to escape the ghetto and rejoin my family in Demblin.

In the Spring of 1940, I succeeded with my son of 2 1/2 years to slip out to the Aryan side. On the way to the harbor where the boats were, a Polish policeman stopped me and he said to me that if I would not give him all the money that I had on me I could say good-bye to the world. Having no choice I gave him the last 20 zlotys that I had.

I walked to the ship's station on the Vistula, there were a lot of people waiting, among them, a small number of Jews. After waiting for 2 days with my child in my arms, with nothing to drink and nothing to eat, not to mention extreme cold, finally the ferry that was going to make the trip down river showed up. But they wouldn't let any Jews on. And so we, the group of Jews there, decided we were going to have to make the journey on foot. We walked the whole day. When the night fell, we looked for a place to spend the night. Just at the outskirts of a village we noticed an open barn and we went inside and we spent the night there.

Early the next morning we set out on our way and after 10 days of walking we finally arrived at the Demblin bridge, over the Vistula. Near the bridge, Germans stood and permitted no Jews to go through. Until today, I simply can't understand what miracle allowed me to cross over that bridge.

Arriving in town, I went to my father's brother, Mendel Mekler. My Uncle lived in a little house with a little kitchen in which 15 people were packed in. Half of the people were Jews from Pulaw. Having no other way to live I had to make my way into the kitchen for some help and get just a little bit of watery soup.

B

In need, pain and terrible cold I lived until the first deportation. In May of 1942, very early in the morning, all the Jews had to gather in the market place. The screaming and weeping of the women, old people and little children is impossible

to convey in words. Now, when I write about these things that I lived through that day - a shudder goes through me.

All the Jews were lined up in rows and they trembled. The Germans, on the spot, made a selection. A number of young people were chosen to remain and work, the Jewish police had a right to take out of the line members of their own families. All people who were chosen for work were sent over to one side, but they were watched by armed Ukrainians. The other Jews were moved towards the trains, accompanied by S.S. and Ukrainian thugs.

I was among the group that was making its way to the train, but, as a result of an accident, or perhaps a miracle, or simply with the strength of the will to live, I succeeded with my child in my arms, to run from that group of people who were on their last journey and I made my way running to the group which had been chosen for work. I looked around me, very carefully, to see if any Germans had noticed me because those people who had wanted to change where they were, from one place to another, were routinely shot down on the spot. I knew that by running from one place to another, to the section where people were being lined up to work, a bullet could hit me any second. But, I had to risk it. And, I succeeded after all, in getting myself into that group.

We stood there, a group of about 150, until late at night, when the whole market place had been finally emptied. An order came that we could for the moment go home. At the house it was barren and empty. Of the 15 people, only 4 remained. Those who remained, wept bitterly. They lamented those who had been taken away, one person wept for their mother, another for their father, another for their children. Whole families were separated, one from another.

A little bit of time passed. Life in the ghetto was bitter and sad. There was hardly a way to make a living. Nobody was sure they'd wake up alive the next morning. There was new talk of another deportation. It wasn't very long before that day arrived.

C

Early in the morning the last people who were still in the ghetto shuddered at the news that the new deportation was about to happen. They surrounded the ghetto and ordered that everybody needed to gather behind the synagogue. When I heard that this was going to happen, I already knew that the people who had been sent away to Sobibor had been gassed and I decided that I wasn't going to go into any of those rail cars. It was better to die from a bullet before dying in those rail cars which had been covered with lye inside. If I had known at that point that there was some kind of organized fighting resistance to the Germans, I would have been the first one to join up.

I decided that I was not going to be dragged into that deportation. I left the house. I locked the door with a very secure lock. After that, I went back into the house through a window and I asked a Jew, who was just about to run through, to lock the shutters with a rod. Inside I locked the door with an iron bar. There was a cellar in our house, and I with my husband and child, went down into the cellar and we lay there the whole night.

Laying there in the cellar, I heard how the Germans smashed in the doors with the butts of their rifles and screamed in savage voices, "Jews, get out!".

I heard shooting and the ground in the cellar trembled. In the morning when the shooting died down, I went out of the cellar and I heard horrible weeping. I went up to the attic and looked out through the slats and I saw many dead people lying on the cobble stones. I went out through a window in the courtyard, and before my eyes, I saw a horrific picture, our courtyard was full of dead people, Jews who had been shot. The earth was red with blood. When I went out from the courtyard to the square by the baths, from which place I'd heard the yowling and weeping, a shudder went right down to my bones. The whole square was full of Jews who had been shot, women, children, old people, heads and feet and hands were just lying around. Many of those who had been shot had their shoes and clothes removed. I also saw little children who had been shot in their little strollers and wagons.

Burying these unfortunate people was the task of the Demblin Jews who remained. They loaded Jews who had been shot onto peasants' wagons. Hands or legs and arms would bump along, hanging over, and they were taken to the Bobrownik cemetery and buried there. And with this ended the sorrowful chapter of the second deportation.

D

After the second deportation, we few Jews who remained walked around like living ghosts, knowing that our turn was going to come. I decided that whatever happened to other Jews would happen to me as well. That meant, I would go to the deportation. Yet, a very powerful will to live, and the desire to be able to tell the world what these German murderers had done to our people, held me back from that kind of surrender. I decided to look for a way to get myself into the work camp in Demblin, which was already in existence for 2 years.

Since the rumors about liquidation had begun to grow stronger and that today or the next day the whole town was going to be completely purged of Jews, one evening, with my son and husband, we made our way to the gate of the camp. There, there were other people standing around, who like us, waited in front of

the gate, in order to somehow get into the camp. My Uncle, Shlome Mekler, helped us. He had worked there for a long time.

In the camp I was employed in agricultural work which was managed by a Pole by the name of Veyetshorkevitch. He used to beat up on Jews in a savage way. It didn't matter to him if they were old people or women. Afterwards I worked at the coal center where they unloaded coal. Four women had to unload a railroad car with 30 tons of coal. The work was unbelievably hard, but we did it and we suffered. We had one desire and that was to survive the War and to survive Hitler. Whole days we used to pull little wagons with coal in order to make sure that the Germans should be nice and warm. And we worked hungry and half naked and sick and broken. We worked hard and it was bitter, and we always lived in terror that a new selection would occur.

We slept in the worse of conditions. It was a very, very small space and almost unbearable. We lay on wooden bunks, one next to another, in the worse frosts, and in the barrack there was absolutely no heat. And that's how we lived, in brutal conditions and in great sorrow, waiting for the moment of liberation.

Meanwhile the Russian offensive was coming closer and the Germans decided to evacuate the camp. I was evacuated with the first group to Czenstechov. In this group, there were children from the ages of 3 to 12 including my child of 6 years.

Arriving in Czenstechov they ordered us to go into the baths. Here, something horrible happened. Men and women came back from the baths, but, the 15 children were nowhere to be seen. They tortured them the first day of their arrival. What became of me upon learning this is very difficult to relate. For four weeks I lay sick in the barracks. Nobody believed that I could live. Without my child, my life was useless in the world, dark. The sun shown no more. It didn't move me that in Czenstechov camp, they'd taken everything from me. That I walked around uprooted, in tatters. I only thought about my only child, who'd been taken away from me. That continually broke me and gnawed at me, and I will always carry the wound in my heart.

When they didn't bring the children back, I turned to the female commandant of the women's camp and I asked her, "Where are the children?" Instead of answering me, she whacked me in the face and I saw sparks before my eyes. When I asked her again where my child was, she began to beat me with her fists. Afterwards she threw me in a dungeon in the cellar where I could neither stand up nor sit down. Mice and vermin ran over me and wanted to chew on me. When they finally took me out of that dungeon, I was half dead.

After this I received the punishment of having to clean the quarters of the camp commander Bartenshlager. I washed all the floors there. I received absolutely nothing to eat all day. On the camp commander's bed I saw my soft blanket lying

which I had received from my Uncle in the Demblin camp from Shlome Mekler, when he died there.

Afterwards, I worked in the ammunition factory, 12 hours without seize. I worked the night shift. The worse work was filling up the bullets. You had to have very good eyes and we were very sleepy and hungry and while we worked they smacked us around.

That's the way we existed until the 15th of January when the camp was liberated. The night before they took my husband and a lot of other Jews and sent them to Buchenwald where they tortured them. They had intended to put me and a lot of other women in the camp onto rail cars and ship us out to Germany, but at the same time they heard heavy artillery explosions and it was coming closer so they had to give up on that plan. All of the Germans in the camp fled. That's the way we were liberated.

Today I find myself in Israel.

(Recorder: Moshe Wasserman)

MY FATHER'S VOW

BY PESA KANNER (GOLDERET)

The first of September 1939, when the town was deep in sleep, all those who dwelled there suddenly shuddered awake from the terrible explosions of bombs and from the huge commotion. The sky was black, German airplanes were dropping bombs on the Demblin airfield as well as on the fortress where they dropped tens of bombs. The smoke and the flames tore through the skies, the fire tongues swallowed up almost all the hangers and airplanes together. Also from the fortress we heard loud explosions. Some artillery had shot at the airplanes of the enemy and they had returned the fire and quickly silenced the anti-aircraft weapons. The bombs also destroyed the school which was near the little park called "Radzes" where there were some artillery and cannons set up. The bombers who had hit the airfield also dropped bombs on the post office street.

It's difficult to convey the stampede and confusion in town. People grabbed whatever they could and began running. Fathers and mothers carried their little children while the older ones held on to their parents' clothing. The whole town began moving on the road to Ryki. The highway was black with people. I and my father and mother and 5 other children, we held each others hands in order not to lose each other, and we ran together.

[See PHOTO-C53 at the end of Section C]

While running we heard heavy explosions on the left side of the highway. That was when the German airplanes had bombed the ammunition warehouses. With great terror we continued, afraid that the German airplanes would see us, huge mass of people that we were, and shoot us down. The airplanes, though, left. The people breathed a little lighter and continued to flee towards Ryki.

After a few hours we arrived there. Part of the people were put up in the synagogue, and a part in the houses of individual families. But many of the Demblin Jews continued walking to Zjelechov, Baranov and Miyechiv. My father decided that we should not remain in Ryki but continue further to Miyechiv because it was not as dangerous as it was in Ryki which was close to Demblin and the Germans would certainly bomb it. We continued further and arrived at Miyechiv.

We spent three days there. The frightening news arrived that a German airplane had flown over Ryki and destroyed it, and hundreds of Demblin and Ryki Jews had died.

It didn't take long before the Germans entered Miyechiv. They let it be known that all of the men, both those who were from that town as well as those who had arrived from elsewhere, had to register at the town hall for work. When my father heard this, he decided that we should go back to Demblin. What were we supposed to do about getting there? There weren't any Jewish wagon drivers who could transport us there, because they weren't allowed to drive outside of the town. So we ended up hiring a peasant for a lot of money. He took us back to Demblin.

When we arrived home, we found our house had been plundered. The whole town looked like it was dead. Little by little Jews began to return from their wandering from the places they'd been driven off to. The German authorities began to torment the Jewish population, to grab them for work, to rape Jewish girls. Jews were not permitted to walk on the sidewalk, only in the street. Jews were not able to freely buy bread, or potatoes or other kinds of food. There was a terrible hunger among them. There wasn't any way to make a living because Jews were forbidden to leave the town and go to any of the surrounding countryside. The rations of food which the Germans distributed among Jews never once was sufficient to quiet our hunger. In order to receive this pitiful ration, one had to stand outside in the most severe cold, all night long, in lines. There were instances when Jews risked it and baked their own bread, but when a German found out about this, they took the culprit out immediately and shot them.

Afterwards the German authorities gave an order that there should be a Jewish Council created as well as a Jewish police. Everyday the Jewish Council had the responsibility of providing a specific number of Jews for various work projects. The Jewish Council decided that each man of property should twice a week work for the Germans. Going to these jobs, though, was quite awful. They would beat people and torture them. Walking to such a job in the morning, one was never sure that one would return from it alive. I always replaced my father when his turn came up and I always would return home covered with blood. It was terrifying at night. As soon as it became dark, drunken Gestapo would come out of their barracks. They'd break into Jewish homes and shoot people, lots of people. Not one night went by when the Gestapo wouldn't shoot some Jews.

After a little while the Germans gave out another order for the creation of the ghetto. All Jews from the main streets had to leave their houses. They were driven to two small narrow streets, Ordinatzky and Okulna. Afterwards the overcrowding was awful, 5 or 6 families in one little room. Soon the ghetto became an incubator for sicknesses and epidemics. The mortality rate became catastrophic. There wasn't one day when several people didn't die. Hundreds in the ghetto lay sick. The little hospital was overflowing, the doctors helpless.

A large number of Jews from bigger cities came to Demblin thinking that they'd be able to survive there. The horrible picture was when the Gestapo would take Jews from the train station and shoot them on the spot. The dead bodies of Jews were brought into the ghetto and buried in a mass grave behind the synagogue. That happened almost every day. But that's not all. The cup of suffering was not yet full. People walked around as if they were insane. One felt as if something terrible was going to happen. Everybody in the ghetto had a premonition, and something worse really did happen.

* * *

In the early part of the month of May, in 1942, the ghetto was suddenly surrounded by Germans, Ukrainians and Polish police. An order was given that everybody had to leave their houses and gather at the market place. The news traveled through the ghetto. Many Jews who were not able to get out quickly, were shot down in their homes. There was no effort to spare sick people or old people or women who were pregnant or little tiny children. The screaming and the crying reached heaven. "Where are my children?!", mother's cried. Children cried for their parents who lay shot on the cobble stones on the back streets of Demblin. The Germans did not permit families to stay together. There were dramatic scenes when children would see their parents on the other side and want to run across to their mothers, but the Germans gave the order that whoever would leave the line they were standing on, would be shot. Adults would hold back little children and not permit them to leave the line, afraid that the Germans would shoot them. They would say to them, it wouldn't take long and they'd be with their mothers again.

With blows from batons, they drove tormented Jews to the train station where rail cars full of lye stood. There they drove all the Jews into the cars and sent them all off to Sobibor. This still wasn't the complete, full blown liquidation because a part of the Jews had been taken out in separate groups and these were people who the Germans thought would be useful for work. And I was one of them who remained to work in Demblin.

I was still young then, 17 years old. I wanted to run across to the other side at that point, where my parents and brothers and sisters stood. Those who stood with me held me back. They grabbed me and said, "Pesela, have a little pity on yourself, they're just going to shoot you."

My father stood across from me, deathly pale, and screamed, "You're just going to stay here for a little while. Go back home and get all your things. When we write to you, you can send us the things that we need".

He still believed what the Germans had told them, that they were just going to be sent to work for a little while in the regions that they had conquered in Russia.

The end of it all, though, was a sorrowful one. The whole transport was sent to Sobibor. The second day after they arrived, all of the Demblin Jews were gassed. This was related by the Polish train worker who had taken the whole train into the camp. This was confirmed by the chimney sweep, Kamasneshteper's son, who succeeded in escaping from Sobibor.

After they succeeded in taking the Jews to the train station, we stood for a long time in the market place. At that point an order came down that the Jews who remained should go to the camp. Whoever wanted to go back to their houses to get their things should show up very early in the morning at the camp. I want to remark here that the camp existed before the deportation. Many Dembliner Jews, as well as Jews from other towns, like Pulaw and Gniveshov, Ryki and other towns were employed and living in the camp. I will add that even before the deportation they had brought a transport of Viennese Jews to Demblin. And with them they had established the camp. One of them was Venkart, he was the camp commander.

* * *

After the first deportation, a transport of Czechoslovakian Jews was brought to the camp. They were put up in the apartments of Demblin Jews. The Czeck Jews brought with them clothing and food and the mood in the town became a little bit calmer. The Czeck Jews accustomed themselves to their new sorrows, those which had been imposed on the Demblin Jews who had to hide themselves through the first deportation in well camouflaged holes and other kinds of hiding places. They came out of their hiding places with the expectation that they could freely enter back into town. For a little while they were able to do that, but it didn't last for very long.

A certain summer morning, early, the Germans ordered that all Jews must gather near the synagogue. At the same time, the town was surrounded with a chain of Gestapo, police, and Ukrainian thugs. The German military, as well, took part in the second liquidation. The order was given that within a half hour, everybody had to show up in that place. The Demblin Jews gathered themselves by the synagogue. The Czeck Jews, though, didn't take the order quite as seriously. They thought that, as had been the case back home, they'd have time to leisurely pack up their things and get their baggage together. They started to do that, but the half hour quickly passed them by.

The Gestapo set out to look for them in the houses. They were looking for Jews who had hidden themselves. The greatest number of the Czeck Jews was still occupied with packing their things. They were driven to the synagogue. Also a number of Demblin Jews were discovered in their hiding places and they too were led to the synagogue. Lying in our attic, I saw through the slats what they did with our Demblin and Czeck Jews.

When the order came to gather near the synagogue, I began to make my way to the camp where I was living. It's just on that particular day I was at home, because I wanted to take some things into the camp. At that point there were two Czeck families living at our house. On the way back from the camp Moshe Elenblum met me and said, "Don't go to the camp because they are shooting Jews at the gate. All those who want to go in are getting shot."

And that's just the way it was. I saw Jews who had been shot, Demblin Jews who had wanted to get into the camp by means of many different little paths. I ran to our house, went up to the attic where a good hiding place had long since been prepared. I went up there and broke into weeping. I understood that I had to hold my breath in so that the Germans, who were running around from house to house in search of Jews, would not discover me. During the time that I lay up there in the attic I saw how the Germans, with the Ukrainians, walked from house to house and took out Jews who had not gone voluntarily. An old woman from one of the Czeck families walked slowly, as if she could barely stay on her feet. A Gestapo screamed at her, "You cursed Jew!", and raised up his rifle, and with all of his strength, smashed her in the head. She fell, lying in a puddle of blood. Her husband with their children began to scream, and two other Gestapo shot down the whole family.

I saw through a crack how they led Jews who'd been captured in the hundreds. The greatest number of them were Czeck Jews. They led them behind the synagogue. It must have been 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. You heard bullets flying everywhere, without cease. Tremendous screaming went up, the kind of a scream that freezes the blood in your veins. I felt like I was fainting. How long I lay there, I don't remember. When I woke up, it was pitch black. For a long time I wasn't able to come to myself. I didn't know what had become of me.

I began to feel around in the dark. I managed to make my way to a crack to the outside and I put my ear against it. I heard steps and people talking Yiddish. I understood immediately that these were the Jewish police. I went downstairs to them, and there I spent the night.

In the morning I understood that the Germans had shot 900 Jews the previous day, both Czeck Jews and Demblin Jews. Among those who were shot was my oldest brother, Meir.

I went back into the camp where I'd worked at various hard labor. There was a selection within the camp. They sent Jews to Konske-Volye. The Germans assured people that things would be good there.

The third deportation from Demblin I didn't witness.

In this way one of the most wonderful Jewish settlements in the land of Poland was extinguished.

I include here my father's picture. My father gave me that picture. He said to me, "If I don't survive this terrible time, my children should have something to remember me by. It should be shame for the German murderers, that they've led the Jews to such a state as this. Because without a beard I will appear like a Purim-Shpiler."

I was liberated in Czenstechov. Today I live in Israel with my husband and 4 little children.

Recorder: Moshe Wasserman

TRAGIC FATE OF A JEWISH DEMBLIN FAMILY

BY CHAYA BROCHA ROZENBERG-URBACK

I, Chaya Brocha, daughter of Itza Motel Shuchtz, who was the son and mother, Aydel-Leah Rosenberg, was born in Demblin and I lived there my whole life.

My saintly mother was the first victim in the town. She was shot by Hitler's murderers. We were 7 children, 4 sons and 3 daughters. My oldest brother, Chaim Rueben, with his wife, Shendel Rosenberg, and their daughter, Chaya-Paysel, and son Aleizor, were taken away during the first round-up and sent to Treblinka. One son, Itche, was in the Demblin camp, after that, they sent him to Czenstechov, and from there to Germany, a couple of days before the liberation, during a march, they shot him. The son Moshe also avoided being deported in Demblin, but the camp director wouldn't let him come into the camp. He was shot, roaming around outside. One son, Motelah, with his wife, Itkah, were saved. They are now in America. A daughter of theirs, Hannah, and her husband, Morchai Rosenveim, have lived in Israel since 1934, with a son, daughter and grandchildren.

My brother, Yaacov Mindel, with his wife Rachel Rosenberg, who is the daughter of the Tenenboim family, were together in the Demblin camp. Afterwards, they were sent to Czenstechov. Three days before the liberation, they sent Yaacov Mindel to Buchenwald. And on one day they ordered that all the Jews should go out of the barracks and gather in one place, and on the other side, the other nationalities should gather. My brother went with the Jewish group and they shot him. My sister-in-law Rachel, with her two sons and a daughter, were liberated in Czenstechov, and they all went away to America. In 1951, as a result of all the suffering she endured during the War, Rachel, my sister-in-law, died.

My sister, Nechomah with her husband, Moshe Specter, had two children. Exactly how they died or were killed, I don't know. They sent them away to Germany. The daughter, Freidela, was with me in the Demblin camp. Afterwards, they also sent her to Czenstechov. From there, they wanted to send her to Germany, but with money, we were able to delay that, and see that she could remain. Since we didn't have any money, my husband went to Ita Sahmit, and said to him, that if we had the money, we could save Freidela, and prevent her from being sent away to Germany. And Ita immediately gave whatever money was necessary and our joy was great. But, it didn't last long. Fate followed her, pursued her. Soon after the liberation in Czenstechov, we went back to Demblin and in a couple of days, the A.K. murderers shot her.

My sister, Nechomah, also had a son, Itzche, 16 years old. He was employed in forced labor. A certain day he didn't show up for work and the Germans dragged

him out of the place he was staying, into the woods, and shot him. Gentiles said that after he'd been shot, he ran around for a couple of hours, with the bullets in his body.

My brother Sholom, with his wife, Leah Rosenberg, who's maiden name was Nachteilor, had two children, Revkelah and Itzhela. During the deportation from Demblin, they sent them right to Treblinka. Never saw them again.

My sister, Faiga, was married to Pesach Blustein. They had a girl named Mindela. They sent Pesach away to Pulaw to work and there they shot him. During the last round-up, the Judenrat ordered that no children should come out into the square. My sister went to a neighbor, a gentile, paid her very, very well, and left her sweet, wise, little girl there. But as soon as my sister was out of the house, the gentile woman drove the 8 year old child out into the street and a German shot her to death. The hard and sorrowful things that my sister endured, can't be described. She remained alone then. There was absolutely no comfort for her. Today she lives in America.

I and my husband, Itzche Urbach, may he rest in peace, and our daughter Revkela, were in the Demblin ghetto from May, 1942 until August of 1942. After that, they put us in cattle cars and sent us to Czenstechov. The overcrowding was unbelievable. As soon as we arrived, they led us into the camp. There, there were already people from our city who had come a few days before. The greeting was a very, very painful and sorrowful one. They didn't even let us talk. They took everything from us. And the most tragic was when they took our dear daughter Revkela. They wouldn't let us see her. We weren't even allowed to cry. We had to go to work. That's the way it was for a few days. And then, they freed the children, they let them out. And among the children that were let go, was our Revkela. I can't tell you, I can't describe the joy of my husband and myself. Our daughter said that when they tried to feed them, or give them something to drink, they wouldn't take it, they were afraid that they were going to get poisoned. But our joy didn't last very long. After a couple of months, they sent my husband to Buchenwald. In the last days before the liberation, during a march, he was so worn out and swollen, that he couldn't march the way he was supposed to in line, and the Germans shot him. Revkela and I were already in train cars ready to be sent away, but they liberated us in Czenstechov, the 1st of January, 1945.

Today, I live in Israel, and Revkela with her husband, Moshe Grossman, and two children in America.

And I have another brother, Shlomo-David who has been living in Brazil since 1929.

FROM CAMP TO CAMP

BY MENDEL SHTEINBACH (UNITED STATES)

In 1936 an anti-Semitic wave spread over all of Poland. I worked at that time at the air base. In the spring of that year 2 Polish police came to the air base and took the Jews' work passes away. I just hung around for a couple of weeks after that looking for some place to work. Then I decided to travel to Warsaw. I went to work there for a Jewish contractor. I made good money until the beginning of the War.

When the Germans decided to cut off half of Warsaw, I went back to Demblin. The life in the town was horrifying. The Germans just grabbed men and women and took them to forced labor. There wasn't any place to hide. I used to come home beaten up and totally worn out. In November I was hiding at the house of Ignatovskeen, in his attic. Suddenly I heard the ringing of bells. That was the warning to call people and tell them that all men, Jews and non-Jews, had to register at work. But those who had a trade would be employed at the airfield.

I went right down to the sign-up place. Among the Jews, I was the second one who got there. The first one was Moshe Beznos. Before the War he worked in the 15th Pulk. He remained alive.

That's how the "paradise" at the Demblin airport began. Each day the number of Jewish skilled workmen increased. We worked and forgot that Jews in other cities suffered horribly. I was able to get my father in the group of painters. He had to shave off his beard and that was a very, very difficult thing for him to do.

But, we got used to the hardship little by little. Especially because in the spring of 1940 we were still around. About half of the town's Jews were working in construction for the Germans. We rebuilt the airfield for the Germans. Until March of 1941, they actually paid for our work. The German power then gave an order that Jews weren't allowed to earn any money. They pulled a lot of Jews off the work. In that way the little "paradise" was over.

New sorrows began. Germans ordered that Jews from the ages of 13 to 55 would from now on go to forced labor. Through the Judenrat they sent a list of those who they needed so that they could be provided. I was sent to the train station. There was an enterprise work going on that was supervised by the Shultz company. They were laying down new tracks. A couple hundred Jews worked very, very hard. Each day, there were accidents and worse. A lot of people were severely injured. They beat us often. The life there was just unbearable.

I worked there for awhile until on a certain evening 2 Polish police came, took me out of bed and sat me down and threw me into the Demblin prison. By the morning, there were 6 men in the prison. They took all of us to the train station and gave us over to the Commissar from Pulaw. There weren't any Jews in Pulaw. This was before the German invasion of Russia. They were making preparations. All of the best Jewish houses had been taken over by the Germans. The Commissar of Pulaw organized a work camp where there were 400 Jews. 200 of them were from Austria. From our general area there were another 200. There were 6 of us painters from Demblin: Yeshey Abenstein, Hersh-Nechemaya Tzitrenboim, Ahron Boymayel, Moshe Puterflam and a kid from Bobrowniki and myself.

In the Pulaw camp, we stayed for about 4 months. The Demblin Judenrat helped us with bread and marmalade. We came back to Demblin after the summer. By that time the Germans were deep into Russia.

2

The situation in the ghetto in Demblin was quite bad. You got 10 Deca of bread a day. On the black market, it cost 50 or 60 zlotys. Various diseases spread, especially typhus. Jews from other places were running to Demblin. The ghetto was overflowing. The number of strangers was almost equal to the natives from Demblin. They cleared out animal stalls and put children, sick people and old people in them.

A new city Commissar came to Demblin. He was a big anti-Semite. He came with 2 Jewish agents, who worked for him. In December of 1941, he ordered that a new Judenrat be picked and a new Jewish police force as well. The Judenrat consisted of 8 members. One, the leader, was Drafish. He wasn't from Demblin. With him in charge we really lived with a lot of danger in the ghetto. He used to come to our house. He would talk to my parents and he suggested that I become a Jewish policeman. He promised that he would take care of the family. That if I became a Jewish policeman, everybody in the family would get an extra 25 deca of bread, 10 of butter, 10 of sugar, 10 of marmalade, 2 kilos of dark flour and 3 kilos of potatoes. We got that for all of 2 weeks. We were 7 mouths to feed, all together, at that point. My mother cried so long until I couldn't stand it any longer and I finally took the job. My number in the police was 13, which as we all know, is not a lucky number. I just couldn't do the dirty work. I kind of hung around doing that until the end of February 1942. I never was able to be strict with people. When they gave me a group of women who I was supposed to take to work, by the time I got to the work place, half of them had disappeared, and the Germans beat me. They scolded me for not disciplining people better.

One day in February, I was standing in the Okulnar street, and an old Jewish lady came out with a bucket in order to get a little bit of water in the square. I made a point of looking the other way so that she could go to the well. She'd managed to get half a bucket of water, when out of nowhere, the German Otto appeared, who was known as the right hand of the Commissar. He threw the water over the old lady and asked her who let her get through to the well. She pointed at me. He didn't need any more. He came over to me and started smashing me with the bucket so long that he just got bent over with his great effort. He took me to the Judenrat and ordered that I be punished. They took away my privilege of being a policeman after a week. They took my uniform and hat away and I went home.

I later had to go back to Drafish, at the Judenrat, and beg him to let me off. I apologized. He said that I had to present myself to the German work office. I went to the German work office and they gave me a number. They sent me to the Austrian contractor enterprise, "Oytored". They were working on the forts by the airfield. We worked in groups of 60 Jews. The work was hard. We hoped that the War would end and we would all survive.

3

We made it through the winter. Spring came. From the ghetto they continually dragged people to work. Every grown-up man or woman wanted to get a chance to get into the work place because they had already begun to liquidate the ghettos in Poland. Everybody thought that if you had work, you'd be saved. The construction work at the airfield consisted of building a camp and the gasoline station. Also, at the fortress, there was another camp, and another one at the train station. By the lakes there was another. In the ghetto, again, the Commissar had his camp.

In the ghetto we lived on Staromyeiska street. My father worked for the city Commissar. My sisters at the train station. My mother remained at home with my youngest brother.

The 6th of May, 1942, I came home in the middle of the day. In the morning, on the way to work, I saw that there were a lot of wives of the members of the Judenrat. They were traveling away on rail cars loaded down with different things. They were traveling towards the little towns in the countryside. Therefore I went home and I told my mother that I wanted to go with her, wherever they took her. She cried and said, my dear child, we shouldn't go together all of us. Maybe we'll be able to save ourselves better if we're separate. I left the house with tears in my eyes and asked God, "Where are you? Why do you leave us Jews such a bitter fate?"

At night three fourths of the town was already gone in Demblin. the streets were empty. You could only here the crying, and the barking of the dogs. The whole night we cried together. It took a few days after the deportation for those who remained in the ghetto to have the courage to go outside again.

4

After a little while they brought in a transport of Czech Jews and established them in our ghetto. Very soon after that, about three weeks later, they surrounded the ghetto and took out all the young men and women for work, the others, to liquidate. With them, a lot of Dembliners as well were taken to the camp. One was allowed to go into the ghetto once a week with a little tag from the work place. After that, people were completely forbidden to go into the ghetto.

When the work at the "Oytoreid" company at the airfield ended, they brought us over to work for another company which was also working at the airfield. The project was called "White billy-goat". The Germans were frightful thugs. About 6 weeks before Rosh Hashanah, while I was at work, a Pole with a German in civilian clothes came through. The Pole was a painter and he knew me. It seemed that they needed workers and he wanted me for a group of painters. I worked together with the Christians. There were just a few other Jews in the group. There was a kind of an overseer. The German considered our group of Jews to be better craftsmen than the gentiles. Everything went along pretty well until a couple of days before Succoth. The German called me over to one side and he said to me that he was going to send me to another job. I answered that yesterday I had left my tools at work. This infuriated him to no end. He screamed that I should go into the office and sit there and not cross the threshold. I sat there with great fright. I understood that something was going to happen.

In the middle of the day he came and said that I should give him my name and my camp number and for what purpose he didn't bother to tell me.

At dusk we left the camp. When the last Jew was over the threshold all of a sudden, out of nowhere, the S.S. and the Gestapo appeared. They surrounded the camp which at that point contained about 1,500 Jews. On the tracks there were rail cars with a locomotive that was all ready. The Germans had apparently not a lot of time, because they were continually looking at their watches. They drove all the Jews to one place. From the group of skilled workers, they took out three workmen and pushed them over to the police barracks. They picked my name and number from the group of painters. I went into the barracks, looked through the window, it didn't take very long. From the 1,500 Jews, there only remained 500. The others with blows were packed into the rail cars and carried off to Treblinka. Demblin was Judenrein. There wasn't one more living Jew in the city. They even liquidated the camp in the city.

My father came back from the camp in the town. At the train station my two sisters and younger brother remained. I tried to get them into the construction site, but I wasn't able to accomplish anything. They would only let skilled craftsmen in there. It didn't take very long after that and the construction camp was completely filled up. They brought men from other camps into the construction site and a small number of women. We were all mixed up. People from Demblin, Ryki, Gniveshov, Warsaw and the Jews from Czechoslovakia.

5

In the spring of 1943, they liquidated the camp at the railroad and sent everybody to Poniatov. I alone from my family remained. I didn't know what awaited me. From day to day life got harder. People were extremely hungry.

November, 1943, I fell from a scaffold and broke my left leg. All I could do was to lie around in the camp for 3 months. In March of 1944 I went back to work. The German gave me lighter work until I was able to stand on my feet.

In June of 1944 the Russians liberated Lublin and the Germans liquidated the camp at Demblin. They sent me to Czenstechov and I worked at the iron works there. I worked as a painter for 6 months.

The 12th of January, 1945, they took the people from the camp of Rakov, where I was, to Germany. I arrived at Buchenwald but barely had I arrived there when they sent me to Flossenbergl. The Germans wanted to make an underground factory there. We slept outside without eating. We were filthy, torn up and extremely weak. The conditions were just indescribable. Every day thousands of people died, and people of all nationalities. From Demblin I met Chaim Kaminsky, the baker, his brother-in-law, and a son. My luck was that they chose me with a Russian prisoner to chop wood for the S.S. kitchen. They cooked for all of the S.S. men there. They threw the peelings from the cabbage and potatoes into the latrine. The Russian and I used to gather up this dirty garbage and hide it close to our body under our clothes. We used to eat it at night. That's how we were able to get through three and a half months. After that, they sent us back to Buchenwald, and from there to Shilenborg, near the Austrian border, where I worked in a stone quarry, packing stone. After that, back to Buchenwald, and from there they sent us to a camp, but we barely got there when the allied armies finally were able to cut Germany into two. The closest way out was to Dachau. They stuffed us into stalls because the camp itself was overflowing. After being there a week, they stuffed us into rail cars and carried us to Mitenvold. There in the mountains the Germans wanted to shoot everybody. But a miracle happened. The 30th of April, 1945, 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the American Third Army liberated us.

From Demblin there were 60 Jews. The place was called Stalag, not far from Mitenvold. The names of the Dembliners that were liberated there were Moniec Ekheiser, Yehusha Schteinback, Chaim Schteinback, Yaacov-Leb Taitelboim, Moshe Taitelboim and others.

After the liberation I was in the hospital for 3 months. After the War I lived in Germany for 5 years, then came to America.

6

A few words about myself and my family:

I was born in Demblin of fine although poor parents. My father was called Moshe Malyazh. My mother's name was Peza Frizirke. I had 4 sisters, Libe, Malka, Rachel, Shendel, and 2 brothers Hershel and Yisrael-Leb.

We lived on Ordenaska street. Our neighbors were Dar Geler Moshe (the yellow Moshe) who was a butcher, Shmuel Kone who was a shoemaker, and Yosele, who was a baker.

In heder I studied with Baruch Zeidele, with Toiven Matas (deaf Matas), and with Moshe-Daden. I studied in the Povshekner school and finished the 5th grade. In 1931 I began to learn painting. I learned that craft very fast and became a breadwinner in my household.

Since I was kind of shy as a young man, I didn't involve myself with organizations. Every once and awhile I used to go to "Hashomir Hatzayir" [a left wing Zionist organization].

The Polish military had facilities near Demblin and they employed a group of Jewish painters. We often worked together. A few of them were able to survive the War.

In 1934, my sister Libe went to Paris. She got married to Saneh Goldshtein, who was the son of Meir Marteks. With their child, a son of 8 years old, they died in Auschwitz in the beginning of 1944. My sister Malka was married to a man from Pulaw, Avram Kleiner, they had a 4 year old son. She and the son died in Poniatov in 1944. Her husband lives today on a Kibbutz in Israel. My mother and my youngest brother Yisrael-Leb died in Sobibor in May of 1942. My sister Rachel and my brother Hershel died in Poniatow in 1944. My father and sister Shendel died in Treblinka in 1944. Honored be their memory.

THE FIRST HALF YEAR OF HORROR

BY MEIR EICHENBRENNER / DETROIT, MICHIGAN

With great terror and uneasiness the Demblin Jews, more than those of other towns, received the news the first of September 1939 about the outbreak of the War between Germany and Poland. That's because there was a fortress and other military objectives which were reasons for a town to be attacked and as a result there was more suffering, torture and people being driven out of the town.

Although the first day was peaceful in the town and there was not anything extraordinary going on, and although the words of the famous speech by Ridz-Shmiglis, that we were not going to give away one button to the Germans, was still fresh in everybody's mind, still nobody was prepared for how quickly the Polish army was destroyed.

In the town, from the first moment, a very oppressive mood prevailed. A heavy load fell on the heart and never stopped causing great fear. Nobody could lend a hand to daily work. Nobody could think of business. The economic life of the town was paralyzed from the first day.

The first night of War fell precisely on Friday evening, when the Sabbath began. There were Jews in a very oppressed mood who went into the synagogue to say the prayer welcoming the Sabbath. Also in the morning, early, when Jews put on their Sabbath clothes with their tallisim under their arms and went to pray, it seemed like with every movement that they made, they expressed their great consternation.

Outside it seemed as if there wasn't any war at all. And as always at that time of day things were quiet and there was a very Sabbath feeling to them.

But, as soon as we started to pray, a terrifying noise of heavy bombers was heard across the city. Momentarily, there was one after another of ferocious explosions, which were ear splitting, and the plaster of the ceiling began to rain over us. We thought that soon the houses themselves would fall down and bury us alive.

From both sides of the city fires were raging and thick black clouds of smoke blotted out the sun.

With the greatest confusion the stampede began of the people who were scared to death. They ran to a big meadow behind the synagogue where there wasn't even a single tree.

There we lay the whole day until night. After every explosion, fresh clouds of smoke rose into the sky. It seemed as if the whole town would soon be consumed with flames. Desperate parents with heart rending cries called for their lost children.

From that early morning Sabbath the quiet and contented town of ours was transformed into an unending, terrifying hell.

When the airplanes went away and it was quiet again, we found out that a bomb had fallen behind the synagogue near the *scron* [polish word] and that from that airborne projectile everybody who had been gathered there at that moment was killed. A terrible sense of awe and fear fell upon each individual. Nobody wanted to go back to his house, but remained there in the meadow.

By afternoon the German bombers appeared again. This time they bombed the region of the ponds and the lakes where there was a big weapons factory. The whole time not one shot was fired at them.

As soon as the night began to fall, when the German bombers were no longer making themselves evident, little by little, after a whole day of deathly fear and hunger, we returned to our houses which we had left in the morning.

But as soon as we started to eat a little something a frightful panic broke out across the town because horses and wagons had pulled up to some of the houses and onto them people had thrown in the darkness a few things that they needed to survive with. The wife and children had been put in the wagons and they started to ride away to Ryki where there were no military objectives.

Soon there began in the darkness a stampede over the countryside in order to see if you could rent a peasant's wagon. But peasants weren't in any mood to risk their lives at a time like that. So everybody just, as best they could, grabbed their valuables and packed as much as they could carry on their shoulders. Broken and worn out, the sick and the old, the women and children, the whole town on foot, began its journey that night to Ryki.

The road from Demblin to Ryki, which under normal circumstances, even on foot, wouldn't take more than an hour and a half or two hours to walk, now seemed like an impossible course to run because of the automobiles that were overturned, the upended wagons and horses that had been killed dragging them. All of these lay on the highway, which had been repeatedly bombed.

The road was so littered with debris that even the beaten retreating Polish army was only able to traverse it at night. And so after a whole night of walking, all the time tripping, falling, getting cut and bruised, dead tired, and in great despair, in fallen feet, just as the morning was breaking, we arrived at Ryki.

Although nothing bad had happened in Ryki, at dawn the streets were filled with Jews, milling around, and from there, in their tired sleepless eyes, you saw the most extraordinary fear and panic.

Soon the synagogue, all the little prayer houses, the bath house, all available space was taken up with homeless people. Everybody looked for a little piece of ground to lay their head on. And nobody even thought of trying to run any further than here.

In Ryki, we soon felt the bitter taste of being without a home. The Ryki Jews were in the same danger as us, they simply weren't able to help us, they didn't have anything to help us with, because what little bit of food or bread there was to sustain a soul, was simply unavailable at any price. We would look at the heavily laden airplanes that used to fly overhead. We'd look at them as part of a routine almost, get used to them, but, although we would stand out in the street and just stand there looking at them, our hearts still didn't lose their basic terror for a moment.

On the third day, early in the morning, some airplanes, like a crow with its terrifying noise, flew over the town, and before one was able to run away to the *scronus* [Polish word], we heard the terrifying explosions, one after the other. Soon the whole town seemed to be transformed into one raging flame. From the burning houses one heard the desperate heart rending cries for help of the wounded.

From all sides the people, in the greatest confusion, were running from the burning city. But as soon as the thick mass of people began to run over the open fields, the German planes came back, swooped down and shot everybody with machine guns.

In just a couple of minutes, the whole field was covered with hundreds of corpses and wounded people, whole families were cut down.

Soon an exodus from Ryki began, people wanted to go any place as long as they could get out of range of danger. The only ones who remained were those who were determined to bury their dead, broken people and worn out who barely were able to walk and themselves seemed like ghosts. The crying pulled their dead in hand drawn carts and with their last strength pulled them to the cemetery. Some even carried the dead on their shoulders. Fathers dug graves for their whole families and young children with their own hands buried their parents.

We escaped towards Boronov, which was in a far off sandy area. On the way we met a very rich Jewish family who owned a mill and estate and lots of fields in the area. They just left everything behind now, and in a wagon that carried loads, pulled by two big strong horses, they traveled in the opposite direction from us.

We told them that we had first escaped from Demblin because the Germans bombarded it several times, and for the same reason we had run away from Ryki as well.

Almost at the same time as us, the Germans came into Boronov and soon began to torture people, Jewish blood began to flow and hell opened up for us. We were not able to get back to Demblin, and were also afraid of traveling by back roads, because they were full of danger.

As soon as the murderers gave an order that all of those who had run away from their towns had to return to them, we began to return, we simply didn't have any choice. Tired, worn out, with swollen, infected feet, we returned to Demblin. Happily the roads at that time were filled with thousands of Poles who were going in the same direction and so we were able to get from Boronov to Demblin without any big problem.

It seemed that we almost were sneaking back into the town like thieves. The streets were deserted. It seemed as if we were the only ones who had just arrived here. We soon learned, though, that almost the whole town of Jews was already there. But, people were hidden away in their houses. People were frightened of showing themselves in the streets because of the Germans. Their torture of Jews was terrifying and savage.

The first day they had grabbed a young Hasid, beat him, and then ordered him to crawl up on the front part of a tank. They started going fast over the cobbled streets. They ordered him to imitate different kinds of animals and to "nay" like a billy goat, bark like a dog, grunt like a pig and crow like a rooster. The young man, beaten up, pale, with all of his strength, held on to the smooth steel of the tank. Finally they began to drive as fast as they could and the young man was beaten over the head with sticks. He fell off, bloody, half dead, and remained lying on the ground.

Each day they dragged people off to work, which consisted of carrying the same load of bricks or wood, back and forth, from the same place. As they did this, they never stopped screaming, "You Jews, you wanted the War and the War is going to make you all die like dogs."

Every day repeated the one before. At dusk the people would return home, bloodied and beaten up.

Once, all of the Jews, young and old, men and women, they were driven by the Germans out behind the town and ordered to pull out the grass with their hands that was growing in the ditches along the side of the highway.

On the first day in the middle of the market place, the Jewish Council (which the Germans created), before the eyes of everybody, before the whole population which had been driven together, was humiliated and tortured. The Germans made one jump on the other and ride them as if one was a horse and one was a rider.

After seven in the evening no living soul dared to show themselves. At night they used to knock on the doors of a house, take somebody out, and you never saw that person again. You never even knew where his bones ended up.

Once on such a night in the first week, we heard the driving in our street of some automobiles which stopped directly across from our house and remained there. Some Germans remained in the cars for awhile, but soon some of them began to get out and walk away. With our hearts beating very hard and our ears on edge, we listened to the terrible sound of their boots until the sound was completely swallowed up in the dead silence of the night.

Not long thereafter we heard some powerful explosions. Outside it became as bright as day. In tremendous confusion we ran to the door but stayed there, afraid to run out because the Germans were still standing around their automobiles.

Through the cracks we saw the wild, wild flames with the red sparks jumping all over the place which lit up the whole sky. The big old wooden synagogue was now a mass of flames.

In the morning, when not more than a smokey pile of black ash remained of the synagogue, the gendarmes, with revolvers in hand, came into the Judenrat offices and ordered that we should tell them who set the synagogue on fire. Again they demanded more new tributes.

Just as the fall was lovely and dry and it hardly rained at all, with the beginning of winter, the weather was mild and warm with bright and sunny days.

Soon after the new year though, the really heavy winter began. Snow storms blew for weeks and weeks at a time. Everything was covered in white. When the snow stopped, the very long heavy cold spells began.

In this winter, 1940, the German murderers decided that Pulaw must become Judenrein. In order to cause the Jews more suffering and torture, the murderers in the course of just a few minutes, with wild sadism and savagery, drove all the Jews out of that town. Nobody was able to take anything with them at all.

The whole road from Pulaw to Demblin had to be traversed on foot. As the Jews from Pulaw made their way in the terrible frost and arrived in the town, it was one of the most shaking and terrifying sights I'd ever seen. Some of the worn out

beaten Jews didn't even have a hat on their head, they had frozen, bloody hair, that was matted together. Others were bent over, barely managing to move on their feet. They had managed to wrap their children who were dying of the cold with rags, they carried them under their arms. The people were resigned. It was extremely difficult to get them to say even one word, they couldn't even cry.

Most of the Jews of Pulaw who had absolutely no means of staying alive, quickly died from cold and hunger. From then on, Pulaw was the word that conveyed the most fear to the Jews of the area.

That winter we lived in terror that at any time the murderers would deal us the same fate as the Jews of Pulaw.

It began to get a little bit milder. The Nazis needed a little bit of slave labor for Pulaw. So they set up a punishment camp there and they used to send Jews from Demblin to that camp. But, it was very rare that those who had been sent to Pulaw came back alive.

If it was possible to manage to save one of the victims, it was thanks to the Jewish craftsman, Avrom Abenshtein, who made boots with great skill and used to please the local commander of the gendarmes, more than any others. With his help and great effort the Judenrat succeeded in getting an in with the Nazis. They bribed them with the most expensive gifts and with money. Whatever appealed to them, whatever they wanted, the Judenrat tried very hard to make available to them, and often could.

Although the situation in town became a little bit easier the Jews worked at various sights and the constant pouncing on people and dragging them off to work stopped. Still life became sadder and more bitter because not one day went by in which we weren't struck to the roots of our being by some horrible news about what had happened to another town. Not a week went by that we weren't caused the greatest pain in the roots of our soul, by one or another savage and bestial murder...

SURVIVAL OF HELL

BY MIRIAM TZIMBROVITCH / NEW YORK

Soon after the first deportation, the 5th of May, they took my parents, sisters and a brother. They were about to send me away as well, but, through a miracle I remained. The S.S. said that I was capable of working. During the second deportation as well, I was lucky, and I stayed behind.

When I went back from the place where everybody was made to gather, I saw that near the synagogue there lay 200 Jews who had been shot. Among the dead was a woman, the daughter-in-law of Braindel Laibkelis, with a child of about a year. The child was still alive and sucking at its mother's breast. His mother was dead. What became of the child I don't know, because I ran, looking for my children. I didn't know, should I look for them among the dead or among the living?

Later I learned that my daughter Poliya was in the Demblin fortress and the other children in the Demblin camp. My oldest son Avrom was in the town. The gendarmes had appointed him to be one of those who moved out all the dead bodies. His pain and grief is impossible to describe.

I and my husband escaped to the train station. While running they shot at us. A woman from Gniveshov fell from the bullets at my feet.

In Miyershansky we went to a Christian, the train employee, Vidat, and spent the night there. Early in the morning I and my husband ran to the train inspection to work. We loaded coal in wagons. We worked there very hard. They would take care of you somewhat if you worked well.

Once, I and Yenta Seinfeld were standing in a freight car. Along the whole length of the connected train was a high fence. And behind it stood imprisoned Russians. Yenta began to converse with a Russian prisoner and afterwards he gave her a little bit of soap and she gave him a couple of cigarettes. The person in charge, a Ukrainian, saw this, and ordered her to get out of the wagon and he shot her. She left behind a husband and two children who managed to hang on for a little bit longer and then they themselves were killed.

Later on they also took people from the train inspection to Konske-Volya, where there were only Jews, a kind of Jewish town. Each day they sent whole transports in that direction. When they got there they would shoot them. They'd also chosen me and I was even in line there. But a train employee stuck his head out the window and said to the S.S. that I was a very useful woman, that I cooked and washed for the train employees, and he saved my life.

I worked for a year in the train inspection during which the children worked in the Demblin camp. They tried to get the officials at the camp to have us sent over there, into the Demblin camp, so that we could all be together. Before Passover 1943, they sent us to the camp. Two weeks later, everybody who still remained at the train inspection was sent to Poniatow, there they were shot. Of all of those who worked at the train station, not a single individual remained.

I and my husband and children went to work every day and together we were able to make it through the hell. But we thanked God that at least we were together.

Once, in the morning, my dear daughter Esther went out to work and very quickly she was brought back dead. I'll never forget that day. When I came back from work my husband, with the camp commander, was there to meet me. The camp commander told me what had happened and I immediately fainted. Dr. Kestenboim saved me through use of injections.

One day before the liberation my son Laibel was sent away to Czenstechov, there they sent him to Germany, and after that, he never returned. They took them there in rail cars, packed in like beasts, with nothing to eat and nothing to drink until they just died.

I WAS BORN IN 1938
(The Story of a Demblin Jewish Child)

BY ABA BRONSPIGEL

Berlin, Mariyendorf, March 19, 1947
(From the material of Yad Vashem, Jerusalem)

I was in a camp and I had stuff to eat. The camp was called Demblin. I was able to play in the camp. But when a camp officer arrived, my life was put at risk. I thought that they would take me and kill me. My father worked at very hard work and my mother worked at a lighter job.

In the camp they hung people for nothing. I learned Polish there. The Germans came often and made searches. These were really, really strict searches. When the Russians approached the camp, the Germans sent me away to a second camp and it was very bad there. I had to hide many times during the course of the day. I worked there very hard at a variety of tasks. Some nights they would call us out for roll call. A child was born there who lives until today. The child's name is Hershela. The mother of the child wanted to strangle him. One night came when they told all the Jews to turn towards the wall and they, in the morning, took my two brothers and sent them away. It was a day before the liberation. At night they wanted to send all of the rest of the Jews away. They took us all into a building where there was storage for gasoline. At night the Russians came closer and they sent us back to the barracks. When it got really late at night, the Russians entered the town and there wasn't a German to be seen.

* Today - Rabbi and head of the yeshiva in Brooklyn, New York

TALES OF A SURVIVOR

BY CHAYA ZILBERBERG-WEINBERG / MONTREAL

UNTIL THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

My father told me that he was born in Bobrownik, 7 Kilometers from Demblin. In the city, there was a fortress where there were a lot of military people and the Jews used to service them with food and clothes and shoes and that's how they let them make their living.

In Demblin there were Jewish contractors/undertakers, craftsmen, storekeepers, butchers and brokers. The older Demblin Jews were very pious Hasidim and of course Demblin had the Modzjitzer Rabbi who was very well known for being a great scholar, composer and teacher. But the youth was very interested in socialism and Zionism.

In 1905 all the big cities in Czarist Russia had experienced a revolutionary outbreak. Workers went on strike and marched with red banners crying out "Down with the Czar". Also in Demblin the work places shut down and the workmen demanded their rights.

The strike was organized by Dembliner students who fought for human rights. They found their way to prison quite a bit. And some of them were sent by the Czar to Siberia. The Jewish students were Barrish Eisenmesser (his daughter Feley Puterman lives today in Israel). He was a student of medicine and after he became a doctor and worked in Leningrad. My Uncle Shlomo Zilberberg had two doctorates and today is an instructor in Leningrad in the University. Schmelzstein was a student who died young of Tuberculosis.

During the First World War, the Russians retreated and the Germans took over. Then after that, Poland of course became independent. The Germans left. I was a little girl at that time and just beginning to go to school and since there was no Jewish school to go into, I went into a Polish school.

There were quite a few of us Jewish students and we suffered a lot at the hands of our gentile schoolmates. They hated Jews and they made us feel it and hurt us quite a bit.

But aside from the anti-Semitism, the life of Jews between the two World Wars was quite rich with social activity. Demblin had all the different Jewish parties, a Jewish school, two banks, free loan service, a free clinic founded by Yarme Vanapol and he really gave a lot of effort and care and worry to this institution.

This is a good time to remember the very wonderful friend of the Jews, Dr. Zochatzky, who worked along with Vanapol in his clinic.

Yarme Vanapol was a very dear and caring Jew. He cared for people free, without demanding any money. Anti-Semitic Poles squealed on him and accused him of being a spy for the Russians so that at the beginning of September, 1939, when the Second World War broke out, he and his wife Anna were sent to the horrible Polish camp of Kartuz-Bereza where they perished.

BITTER TIMES FOR JEWISH DEMBLIN

When the Germans came into town that's when the really bitter times began for Jews. I and my child, my parents, sisters and brothers went into the Sobyeshin forest in order to try and hide. However, the Polish bandits made a practice of attacking and robbing the Jews that they encountered in the forest. So we decided we better go back to Demblin. The city then was completely under the control of the villains. The Jewish businesses had been taken over by gentiles. The Germans managed to appropriate everything that was worth anything, any kind of valuable objects or merchandise. They made people go to forced labor.

A little time later, in one of the narrow streets, they created the Jewish ghetto. We went there one rainy day. My child (daughter) became very sick, diphtheria had arrived in the camp and everything got a lot worse. I risked my life, left the ghetto, and went to bring a doctor. Things like that were absolutely forbidden. If they caught you outside the ghetto they would just shoot you on the spot and that's exactly how a son of Meir Aranyak was shot to death. I didn't care about the danger, and I was determined to save my child. I made my way to the gentile doctor Gelber and he agreed to come back with me and thanks to Dr. Gelber the child was saved.

Two years later, when we were in the camp by the station, Dr. Gelber risked his life again by coming into help Nesan Vanapol who was extremely sick. I remember that then, on that occasion, the Ukrainians and German gendarmes surrounded the barracks. We were sure that now we were going to die. The doctor himself was quite desperate. "I'm going to be shot like a dog. My wife and my child won't even know what happened to me." I saw Dr. Gelber again in the camp at Shultzen, he was helping a sick Avrom Shilenger. Later, he died. The wife of Dr. Gelber was terrified and she went to the barbed wire to wait for her husband. The doctor was a great democrat, a great friend of Jews, and a wonderful physician. The anti-Semites though, ratted on him, said that he was a Jew and the Nazis murdered him.

The situation in the ghetto became frighteningly bad. There was terrible hunger. People were dying from typhus and other kinds of diseases. The Nazis emptied all

of the Jewish houses in the ghetto of everything they could get their hands on. Any valuables, any possessions, any clothes. And sadistically they beat and murdered Jewish women, old people and children. In this brutal work these people really distinguished themselves: the folksdeutche, Edec, and the vicious German Peterson and Knophayder.

THE ROUND-UP

The 6th of May, 1942 was the first round-up of Demblin Jews. They drove hundreds of hungry, sick Jews out of their houses, beat them, pushed them into overcrowded rail cars and sent them to the death camp in Sobibor. They never came back from there.

The young men were driven to forced labor at the Demblin airfield and the train station. I and my family succeeded for the time being in hiding ourselves. The ghetto in Demblin during the first round-up was emptied of many Jews, but later on the city was fully packed again because in the place of those that they deported, the Germans brought in thousands of Jews from Slovakia. The situation was absolutely horrible, the overcrowding and lack of sanitation caused lots of typhus and death.

The second round-up came on the 15th of October, 1942. During the second round-up, they murdered hundreds of Jews, young and old, men and women.

I, my child, my mother and a few other women succeeded in getting into Mayontek Vientschkov on a temporary basis to work. But we didn't remain there very long because on the 28th of October, 1942, very late at night, the S.S. man Wagner let us know that he needed to take us to the Jewish town of Konske-Volye where we would be safe. I understood at that point that he was trying to hoodwink us.

I JUMPED THROUGH THE WINDOW

When the villains encountered a woman or mother with her child, they would regularly, in a bestial way, murder the child before the mother's eyes, and then they would kill the mother. This I was never going to let myself live through. And so, leaving my dear mother, Shayndela, I threw myself out of the window and being sure that we would both be shot. But after me, the children of my husband's brother, Sonya and Nachman, jumped out after me and also Tzertzah's fiancée. Luckily, under the fence there, there weren't any gendarme's around. All that we had, we had left behind us in the courtyard. Sitting there in deathly fright, barefoot and half naked, I heard how they led out my mother and the other women. I went back to get something for my child and already there were some

Poles standing around there and they warned that the S.S. man wasn't very far away and if I hung around I was going to get shot. In terrible fear, I grabbed the child in my arms and began to make my way to Demblin, not knowing if I'd find one Jew left in the city. My child fell asleep in my arms, my heart wept with pity each minute death threatened us because the Poles knew and could have turned us in to the gendarmes. I was very, very preoccupied with the fate of my poor mother.

I came to a farm stall and I met there a peasant who I didn't know before. I laid my child on the ground, I was extremely afraid that the peasant would discover us. It was dark when I set out again, trembling at the barking of the dogs, and hoped that they wouldn't wake up the peasants.

A good peasant who lived not far from Krukovke in a little colony took my child in his arms and led us to a windmill in an old suburb. We went into Weingelechen, and from there Robert took us to the gates of the camp, not far from Dr. Zochatzky. At the gate there were the corpses of several Jews lying around. It seemed that they wanted to get into the camp, the gate was locked and they shot them. We succeeded in getting in. My child and I were able to sneak to the train station where my family was. The barracks at the station didn't have any windows or doors and it wasn't heated and any Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Pole or German all had the right to kill us on the spot. Winter was horribly cold, and they used to come in with wagons, and load up all the sick people and send them to Konske-Volye. Rudolf, Zygert, Peterson and other sadists used to manage to shoot quite a few people every day. We were terribly hungry and sick there. On one bitterly cold day they took my two little sisters, young, blossoming children. I wanted to go to them, but the children started to cry and begged that I should go away because the Ukrainians would shoot me. In Konske-Volye they kept them in open, unheated houses.

And soon, all kinds of diseases started to break out. My little sisters became sick with typhus from lying on the bare ground. The older one, Perla, who was 16 years old, died. The younger one, Esther, was lying hugging her, not even knowing that her sister was already dead. Later on, we succeeded in getting Esther back to the train station and she told us hideous things that happened at Konske-Volye.

Besides my personal suffering, I saw terrible pain and cruelty at the station.

The 14th of July, 1943, there was a deportation to Poniatov. At 12 noon, the S.S. came with machine guns, gave an order that we should get ready to travel. Knowing that my son, Yuna, was more threatened than I was by death, within eyesight of the S.S., I tore through the barbed wire and I and my child, both covered with blood, succeeded in getting into the house of a Christian acquaintance near the station. We weren't able to stay there very long because

the gentile was afraid that the gendarmes would find us and kill them for hiding Jews. Not having any place to go, I decided to go to the rich peasant, Stachorsky, who lived in the same town as my family, the town of Tsherniov not far from Lugov. He had helped Jews, given them food to eat without demanding anything in return. The anti-Semites squealed on him to the gendarmes who hung him with his family in Demblin.

Stachorsky's address was given to me by the leader of the public school, Skovransky, who was a great democrat and a friend of Jews. Later, he, two weeks before the liberation, was murdered by the A.K. in the sight of his wife. This was told to me by Vladeyslav Yarashek, a poor bricklayer, who gave his last bit of bread from his own mouth to Jews. Later he died in 1945 of tuberculosis.

I went away with my child to the Katlavneyah, near the camp, actually, to the airport. And there I was able to meet with my husband and my brother Feivel who had succeeded in running away from the station. My two sisters, Revkelah and Estherlah, and my brother-in-law, Baruch Perelman, from Pulaw, along with all the Jews from the station, had been sent away to Poniatov and they never came back from there. The 3rd of November, 1943, Poniatov and Travneykey were destroyed.

GOOD PEOPLE HELP US

In the camp, at the airfield, we didn't dare to remain very long, because we weren't legal. The same night we spent in the field of rye and we were shot at by Ukrainians. Luckily, the bullets missed and before dawn, with our hearts beating, we went back to the Katlavneyah because we had a place to hide. I remember that the woman, Edjsha Ekheizer, brought us something to eat, but because of our great sorrow, we couldn't eat knowing that each minute death was coming closer.

The wife of Doctor Paris came in. She wanted to calm us down and said that people in the camp asked the director of the camp to intervene with the German authorities and let us come in. She also gave me the address of the Pole who she said would take us in if it really got bad in the camp. She, with her husband and daughter, if they were able to, would also go there. At the same time, the director of the camp came with good news that we were going to be allowed to come in. In the camp in Demblin we stayed for a year, we didn't have any money, we were half naked and barefoot, but good people helped us. And a deeply felt thanks comes to the wife of Chaim Teichman for her humane treatments.

In the Dembliner camp, we stayed until the 18th of July, 1944. When the Soviets approached the Vistula, the camps inhabitants were moved in two groups to Czenstechov. In the first group, were 15 children, and these children were murdered, thanks to the brutality of the German Bartenschlager. And a great deal

of culpability in this event rests with the director of the camp, a German Jew by the name of Yoles. The second group, in which there were 30 children, they took away to liquidate, and for two days and nights the children were in terrible fear, but after that, they gave them back to us. And why the Nazis didn't kill them and return them I don't know until this day.

In Czenstechov we remained until the 15th of January, 1945, when the Red Army liberated us. A day before that, the Germans deported 800 Jews to Buchenwald. Among those deported, were my husband, my father and my brother.

In the last days of the War, they sent my father on a death march, and along the way, they drove the Jews into a river. And coming out of the river, my father died. My husband and brother avoided the death march, because they were so sick and swollen with hunger. They remained in Buchenwald until the Americans and English soldiers liberated them.

And finally the end of the horrible War came. My husband and brother came back from Buchenwald. We lived in Lodz, and after that we left Poland. Now we live in Montreal, Canada.

THE RUSSIANS LIBERATED US

BY ESTHER SHAPIRO-TENENBOIM / PARIS

Demblin wasn't a very big town, but it looms large in the consciousness. We didn't live in any great riches, but with a great deal of warmth.

There was a great drive and interest to accumulate culture and knowledge in the town. There was a culture association with a big library. Every week we had a culture evening and we received answers to the questions that interested us. We had a drama circle which presented beautiful productions and the proceeds went for community projects.

To our great sorrow, Hitler cut off everybody's life!

In 1938 we had already seen the beginnings of the enormous tragedy. We were afraid of the littlest gentile child. They didn't let a Jew walk by peacefully. They threw stones at him, whistled, and made fun. They used to scream at that time that Hitler was going to come for us. Later we Jews could not believe the Hitler fury. Jews said that we would outlive Hitler.

In September of 1939, the nightmare began. Each day new proclamations, forced labor accompanied with murderous blows, yellow badges, herding people into ghettos and camps, torture, hunger and freezing. And above everything the constant fear of death. In this way Jews believed they would outlive all of the sorrows and all of the suffering.

On the 6th of May, 1942, was the first deportation of 2,500 Jews. Of my family suddenly 14 souls were taken away. All of them became martyrs.

Afterwards they began other deportations. This time we're talking about mass murders. On the streets of Demblin, hundreds of bodies lay. The ground was red with blood. That was the 28th of October of 1942. The remaining people were driven into camps. Not one Jew remained in the city.

We worked in a camp, a few kilometers from Demblin. Everyday, or once in two days, there was an inspection by the S.S. The terror is something that I can not describe. The children had to lie hidden in their beds. We were in the camp in Demblin until 1944. When the Russians approached, the S.S. deported us to Czenstechov. There in the camp things were even worse. They soon took away 16 children and killed them. They also took children from us and after 10 days we succeeded with quite a bit of effort to free 33 children.

My child was the youngest, 1 year and a half old. When the inspection came from the S.S., I covered my child in a blanket in bed, he was always crying from hunger, but when the S.S. came, he didn't cry at all. It's impossible to describe the terror of the parents and of the children when there was an inspection. The children hid themselves like old people.

Two days before coming to Czenstechov, they sent away 200 families with children. The children were taken away and killed.

Ten days before the liberation there was a selection. They took the mothers with the children and the old women. A child of 4 years old begged her mother that she shouldn't leave her and held her as hard as she could with her hands.

When the Russians came and liberated us we kissed the Russian soldiers. I will never forget that thanks to them, we were free.

THE SECOND EXPULSION

BY ZAHEVA AMITZ

It was during the middle of the day, a sunny fall afternoon. We were taking advantage of the good weather, because we'd just been doing our washing. We were hanging it out. We came home to prepare the midday meal and sat down to eat.

Suddenly we heard shooting. Perhaps another action was beginning to happen because it had already been 5 months since the first one. We were lucky on that day, we were all at home. My sisters were already at work in the camp at the air base. We had tried to bring Grandma and Grandpa home from the ghetto, but we weren't able to, because old people weren't allowed into the camp. Even young people had a really difficult time to get in as workers.

We were sitting there and trying to figure out what to do and realizing that it was going to be really difficult to deal with this situation given that we were such a big family of 9 people. There wasn't any room to hide and it wasn't really feasible to escape either. There was Grandma and Grandpa, mother and father, three sisters, my sister-in-law, Sara with an 18 month old child (Poltzeya). Leijsha, my brother, was one of the first victims who the villains sent to Sobibor during the first round-up.

Meanwhile the shooting grew more intense. The Christian neighbors told us that there were already quite a few victims who had escaped the ghetto. They added that the whole city was surrounded by German soldiers. My father decided it was senseless to go out of the house, with such a big family. But there was one way out, to hide ourselves. We lived in a two family house with a Polish family. From the corridor there was an entrance to the attic. In the corridor there was also a little cellar. My father told us to pack into the cellar, but there just wasn't enough room for everybody. So I, my father, and Unka (sister), remained in the house.

My father's nerves just gave out though. He screamed to us, "Maybe nobody is left now in the town? If they find us, they will murder us. I don't want to have that on my conscience. I am going to run over to the square and see if there's any Jews left in town. That way I'll be able to find out what our fate is going to be of everybody else."

He ran out of the house. I remained with Unka. We were two great contrasts between us. I was cold-blooded while she was just completely broken up by the experience. She began to cry and scream that they were going to kill us all. She opened the door and ran after father.

Remaining alone, I began to think of how I was going to hide myself. I figured out that the door to the cellar needed to be hidden, covered up somehow, so that nobody would be able to see it. I went into a room which was off the courtyard and there I found a big bucket of sawdust which was used for heating. I scattered it all over the floor, above the cellar. Then I went into the house, took down the plates with the food on them from the table, cleared out the rooms, took out two clean covers from a cupboard and spread them over the beds. My mind worked at this in a very calm, lucid way. I realized if the Germans were to come into the house they should have the impression that there aren't any Jews living here. I was young. I didn't have an especially Jewish appearance. I still remember today, that moment that I thought to myself that I was capable of saving my family.

Meanwhile at our neighbors, three small girls [Polish] remained. The neighbor and her husband were at work. The oldest of the little girls was 13 years old. Right from the beginning she just didn't know what I was doing, she couldn't figure it out. I wasn't able to foresee that I was going to have a lot of problems with her.

The Germans meanwhile looked throughout the whole city, not avoiding a single house. When they found Jews, they shot them or they drove them into the market place. They also came a lot closer to our street. In the two big houses directly across the street, where Slovakian Jews had been put up, those who'd been brought to Demblin after the first deportation, these were old people and they didn't have the slightest intimation of what it meant to hide themselves. It didn't even occur to them to take cover. They didn't even believe that the Germans were capable of murdering innocent people. When the murderers went into those houses and saw that people were just sitting calmly in their houses, the Germans went crazy. It is very difficult to describe what happened there then.

As our house was right across the street and the neighbor's children saw all of this, the biggest one ran into the house and began to scream:

"They're taking everybody out of that house across the street. Get out of here, because if you don't, I'm going to call them over here immediately." So I was afraid that she was going to run right out of the house. Who knows what she was capable of doing. Happily, I didn't lose my cold bloodedness and I ran to the door and locked it. Today I can barely believe how much strength I had, how much it took me to get through those minutes. I fought with that little girl as if I was fighting with a wild animal. She screamed, she threw herself around, she wanted to take the keys out of my hand. I didn't realize then, or think then, that she was really in a very unfortunate situation. Besides that, she was just 13 years old, without a lot of experience in life. Her terror got even bigger when the Germans suddenly entered the two houses across the street and carried out a massacre of the old people. Finally I was able to calm her down.

Meanwhile the Germans left. It became dark. The bloody massacre was over. From 500 to 600 victims were killed. My father was able to remain with us after that for 2 weeks. He was sent from the other camp to Maidanek and after a couple days he perished there.

To our luck, a small number of people still remained in the town because the Germans needed a group of Jews in order to clear out the dead.

We moved in and started to live on Okulna street. My father immediately began to build a hiding place, especially for Grandma and Grandpa, who weren't able to get work in the camp. Not to mention that my father was a very pious Jew, full of hope. He never stopped believing in miracles. He never gave up that something would come along and save us.

We were practically the only full family in the town who had lived through three actions. And all that thanks to my father's great efforts and initiative.

After the second deportation came the third. The city remained without Jews. During the third deportation, my father was taken away to Maidanek. But he made a good bunker for his parents in which they remained for a whole week. After a lot of effort we were able to work out a deal with peasants to bring them secretly into the camp. Now it's easier to tell about it than it actually was, to get them from one side of the barbed wire to the other. But we were able one way or the other to get them inside.

Grandfather died after a couple of months. But Grandma was able to live to see the liberation, after which she died. In between she suffered no end to torments.

As my sister-in-law Sara was part of the camp, all of us, including her child, went there. Believe me it wasn't an easy thing to save little children, but we were able to do it, because we really wanted to stay together. Maybe it's because of our spunkiness, will to fight and our initiative and our will to live, that almost all of us who went into the camp came out alive.

I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO DESCRIBE EVERYTHING

BY YOSEF DAITSHER / ARGENTINA

The first tragedy was when they took our father during a deportation. After that I went into the camp. We were four Jews lying on bare bunks, covered with a little piece of torn blanket. There were 4 of us, we were very cold. The four were: Malkela, Bruchela, Sara, my wife, and I.

I felt that I wouldn't be able to stand it. I was used to my nice bed and all of my personal bedding and I decided to go with the police into town and get it all done in a half hour. My sister's son Simek was a policeman, so I asked him if he should go with me.

I went to my house, everything was there. I got together a little bundle, a warm covering, and I made a package. Meanwhile a gendarme came in and asked me what am I doing? I answered that it's my house and that I just came here to pick up a few things. He answered, you're still in the camps, how do you come to just walk out and come to town like this? He took out his pistol from his holster and he was about to shoot me. My sister's son knew him and stopped him. He grabbed his arm and said that I was his Uncle and he should let me go and he promised him a gift. I left my bundle that I'd prepared and I just got out of there.

When I got back to camp, my children didn't recognize me, so deeply had I been affected by the terror. I didn't go back again after that. I simply suffered cold and hunger.

I worked in a big hall washing the train cars with a rubber sponge. Once a German came and he smacked me in the head, more than once. I was almost dead. He dragged me outside, my Malkela and Bruchela cried bitterly, they laid me on a garbage wagon and took me away to bury me.

My son-in-law Yosel found out about this, and he came very quickly to the camp, he went to the Jewish doctor, Kestenboim, and he pleaded with him to take pity on me and to save me and he cried quite a bit. The doctor opened my veins, stuck 10 needles and pulled out 2 glasses of blood.

I wasn't able to return to work. In the barracks I wasn't able to lie around either. It was very bad and very painful.

Something happened with a woman who worked in the kitchen. She'd fallen into a big pot of very hot water and she was burned all the way up to her throat. They laid her in a room and just hid her there. If such a thing had happened to a Christian, they would have taken them to a hospital. But with a Jew, they just

sent them to the camp to be murdered. I was in that room with her for 3 weeks and what I suffered there is just beyond description.

Later a group of inspectors came. They were able to hide me, but the woman who'd been burned was impossible to move. Everybody thought they were just going to shoot her. But the camp commander, a Viennese Jew, a lawyer, came and with a smile said to the people who were doing the inspection, "Gentlemen, gentlemen. You see this woman here? She found out that there's no meat in the pot. The way she found out was diving right into it." He told them about this, exactly how things had happened, and they left, they didn't shoot her. She lay there for 6 months and they were able to heal her. After that she was murdered with her husband. They were from Preschov.

I risked my life again. I went into town to get something to cover myself with because I just couldn't stand the cold. Right on the day that I happened to go into town, the Ukrainians came and started a search. They wanted to find out if there were any Jews still remaining in the town. They rooted around every conceivable corner. The gendarmes came into my house. They dragged me out of the house and ordered me to go to the market. That's where there were already thousands of people. I left in the direction of the market, but I changed my course and started going toward Miyezantzky. I came to the bridge and I saw that there were 3 gendarmes there. Now what do I do? I had a little ticket with me, a little official card, which said that I worked at the camp, so I went right up to them, I showed them the card, and I said, "Look gentlemen, I work in the camp, and the camp commander sent me into town to buy something. The gendarmes won't let me into town." "Well", they said, "don't you know that there's a deportation today. Go back to camp." And they let me go through.

[Wife speaking now] I wanted to hide myself at the house of a Christian acquaintance. I was sure that he would take me in because when my father had been deported he'd asked why didn't my husband come to him, he would have hidden him. This was Kripek, the son of old Trazepsky. It was only when things were really bad that I came to him with a very terrible pain. It was only really bad circumstances that brought me there and he said, "You have to get out of here already". "You know already they are deporting Jews, all of the Jews, have pity on me. You've already said that you would hide my husband. I don't want to go, because they're just going to shoot me right away. There are gendarmes standing everywhere. You've known me now for 30 years. You are my best friend. Have pity, hide me." He said to me, "You know that the Germans have hung up signs that say that anybody who hides a Jew will be shot along with his entire family. I really like you, but my wife and my children are even dearer to me than you." I cried and I begged until he screamed, "Get out of here!", and drove me away.

I ran further until the rail lines. It was impossible to traverse the rail lines because there were gendarmes standing around. I risked it and went across a little bit

further from where I was, as far away from them as I could. Even in peace time, one was forbidden to go there. Only with special permission were you allowed to go there. I don't know where I got the strength to run across the tracks as quickly as I did. I went towards Mechaline. There I had a good female Christian friend and I thought that she would hide me. I went into the courtyard, nobody was there, the door was locked. I went into the stall with the animals. There was a lot of hay there. I crawled into the hay. The Christian woman was at that point in another town.

I heard how people were being taken to the train. The screams and the shooting were absolutely horrifying. I was trembling. The barn was just on the other side of where the train cars were, which were being loaded up to be sent away. With each shot my heart fell.

At 2 in the morning the train went away. I heard how the Christian woman and her husband came into the barn and with light from an electric lamp they began to milk the cows. After that she went out again.

When it was day I came out of my hiding place and I went to her and I said, "Good morning". She looked at me and she said, "Where did you come from?" I told her I was hiding in Miyezontzke and I asked what she'd heard. And she told me that all of the Jews in the town and from the camp had been deported. I said to her, "*Veyes mir*. I'm Jewish myself. They're going to shoot me. What am I going to do? I beg you, give me a little scarf so that I can hide my face and walk through your field with me so that I can go back into town." She led me through the rail lines, my heart beat like thunder. I didn't know what to do. At that moment I saw another group of Jews walking by. They saw me as well and they came running over to me. They were overjoyed that they hadn't sent me away. They told me that at my house my children were sitting around, crying and screaming that their mother had been sent away. "Yosel's wife and his little boy have been shot". This just made me feel terrible. They said, "If your children would just know that you're alive." I said, "I just can't go another step. My legs won't hold me up". They said, "Your children aren't going to work anymore, they say, let them shoot us, what's there to live for? Their father isn't alive anymore. Their brothers aren't alive anymore. Gitela isn't alive anymore and neither is Sevek." Meanwhile one of the little boys called out, "I'm going to run into town and I'm going to tell them that you're still alive and then they'll go back to work. It's still early. Wait here and I'll come back with them." And that's what happened. They came running together. We went to work.

Another time I had a terrible scare because of a couple of eggs. I went out to throw out a bucket of garbage in the big garbage can and I saw 4 eggs lying there. I hid 2 of them in a pocket in my blouse and 2 inside my clothes. As soon as I walked away from that big garbage can, a gendarme came over and asked me, "What do you have hidden in the big garbage can?" I told him the truth, that

I just found 2 eggs and I showed him the pocket. He took me into the police headquarters and said to them that I had stolen the eggs. I wept and I told them that I didn't steal them. I just found them in the garbage can. They questioned me about whether I had any more. "We're going to search you and if you have any more we're going to shoot you". I unbuttoned my blouse and showed them that I didn't have anymore. My blood ran cold. If they did a search any further, I'd be shot on the spot. But God had mercy and they let me go.

Once they brought the mid-day meal with just a little bit of watery soup. I was just about to faint from hunger. We had a woman there who was a forewoman and she was a real piece of crap, a sadist. I was sitting with Mrs. Shtamfater when this woman boss saw us and noticed that we were taking a little bite out of our meal. She took both of us to the gendarme's headquarters and she said that we were eating and pigging out during the time we were supposed to be working. She left and we sat there crying: "We worked with our hands but one little bite of bread in your mouth because we couldn't get any kind of real meal in time and we couldn't even stand on our feet we were just so weak with hunger". One of the gendarmes ordered another one, "Hunt, whip these two, punish them." And the guy who he ordered to do this, looked at us, it was plain to see that we were more dead than alive and he said, "Please punish them yourself. I'm not going to beat these women up." And this was the first time that a German had refused to beat us. Imagine what my children were going through when they had seen that we were being led into the headquarters.

Once again I lived through great terror during the taking away of the mid-day meal. The carpentry place where Yosel was the manager was not very far from the hall where we were. Once we went in there because it was warm in there. The oven in there was always burning in order to warm things up. On the way to the carpentry place I saw a couple of potatoes. Now who was going to leave a treasure like that lying around? I picked them up, found a newspaper and wrapped them up. I decided when I got the chance I would roast them on that oven. So naturally a German meets me immediately and asks, "What are you carrying there all wrapped up?" I tell him, "It's just a couple of old rotten potatoes". And he said, "No, it's cloth, it's material." I show him the potatoes and he sees that they're not spoiled potatoes but that they're very good potatoes. He asks me, "Where did you steal them from?" And I say to him, "I didn't steal them, they were just lying here." But this conversation didn't help me at all and he took me to the headquarters. Well I sure didn't want to but I didn't have a choice. He led me in right when the mid-day meal was being served. He said, "Wait a minute, I'm going to get the police here". "Good, I said, I'll just wait here." So he went upstairs and I disappeared, fast. I ran into the carpentry shop, neither dead nor alive, just barely able to catch my breath. I ask, "Where's Yosel?" It turned out there was a real tragedy involving Yosel. He had cut off three of his fingers. He had been taken away and that was just another supplement to my own terrible fear and trauma.

Once, when we were coming from work, some S.S. men showed up with a big dog. They were looking for Yoneh Hoychman, son of Dovren, Yosel Chasiyes' brother. When he heard that they were coming after him, he hid. They ordered the camp commander to produce Yoneh. They looked for him but they couldn't find him. The S.S. said to the camp commander, "We're going to wait for 10 minutes, and if you don't produce Hoychman, we're going to shoot 10 men." The camp commander screamed at Yoneh's mother, "Where did you hide him? Give him up immediately. I'm not going to let them shoot 10 people just because of one." The end is that they did in fact find him and the S.S. people said to the dog, "There, that's a Jew." The dog jumped on him and tore out living pieces of his flesh. His screams reached heaven. When they took him out of the camp we still heard screams from far away. My mother, brother and sister, as well as myself, all of us, saw this thing. We were more dead than alive.

Now I want to tell you about our deadly terror. Ten Jewish policeman, every day would lead us to work. On a certain day they all disappeared and never came back to the camp. In the morning, a group of S.S. came and they said to us they're going to shoot 100 men, 10 for each of those who had disappeared. Now just imagine what that did to us. You just can't describe things like this. The camp commander was a Viennese Jew, a lawyer, and one of his acquaintances was a Lieutenant, to whom he had given a lot of things. That person was somebody who took people away, but because of that he could also stop things from happening. The camp commander said to the Jews, "Listen Jews, if you want to stay alive you better produce everything that you have hidden. I have the opportunity with this officer who is running things around here to tell him that if they come around and they start taking people to Auschwitz, he's not going to get anything from us." And that's the way it was. He didn't let the 100 Jews be taken. He said, "If you want to take my people you should be taking soldiers, because it's my people who are learning to do the same tasks as the soldiers because they're fighting on the front." The Lieutenant said that because of these 10 dopes who escaped, it was these 100 innocent people who were going to be shot. And these 100 people were good workers. They finally realized that it really wasn't worth it to shoot a 100 people because of them. The end is that they left. We raised our hands to God and thanked Him for His mercy and that was really a great miracle.

Later on they did catch 6 of them and 4 of them disappeared.

Yet another terrifying tale. In the middle of the night a fire broke out and a barracks burned down. Ten young men worked there, they were all from Demblin. They rounded up all 10 of them and while they were still alive, they laid them in a grave and covered them over. And that's how 10 young guys were murdered. Their parents were also in the camp. This was done by Poles who also worked in the barracks. They had squealed that the Jews were the ones who had set things on fire.

I don't have the strength to describe everything that I witnessed. They took away 3 boys from our barracks and shot them so that we could see, because of a little piece of bread which one had lifted from another.

People ask, "Why didn't you run away?" And I want to explain to people that it was impossible.

Six boys cut the fence and got away. They wanted to get to the forest of Ryki but on the way they were hidden by a peasant who they asked not to betray them. He said that they could rest in peace. They waited there until it got dark and then the peasant went and squealed. Before you knew it, the gendarmes came and shot them down.

THE SIXTH OF MAY, 1942

BY MALKA LEDERMAN-FLECK

Who could have foreseen that with the entrance of the murderous Germans into Demblin that such a hell would commence for the Jews which lasted until the destruction in the gas chambers, at brutal forced labor or from a brute's bullet.

That Wednesday, in the morning, like everyday, we were going to work. Nobody thought that soon afterwards the deportation would begin of the inhabitants of the ghetto. Six o'clock in the evening, when we came back from our forced labor, a horrible scene was revealed to us. The houses of the ghetto were empty, destroyed, everything around them was exactly as a pogrom. A terrifying, deathly quiet prevailed in the streets. It was the silence of the graveyard.

They told us to stop and remain standing in the street. That we could not go into the ghetto to our homes. I know that among the group of Dembliner Jews, they had taken away my mother and father, my beloved, dear parents. A howling cry tore itself from my heart. I just wanted to see them one more time. Why were we separated? Why was I no longer with them?

I made this complaint to the Creator of the world. Why can you just allow all of this to happen, that the German devil should do this to our people? The Germans didn't even let the pious Jews take their tallit and tfillin with them. Why did the Creator of the world allow them to burn the holy books, the Torah? Why did He allow so many children to be orphaned and so many women to be widowed?

Three years we lived in terrible need and horrible conditions, always brutalized, tortured, but always with an underlining sense of Jewish hope. We had some confidence that the sorrows that befell us would come to an end and that the terrible exile would stop. The end did come, but not like we had dreamed and hoped that it would. The 6th of May, 1942 cut out the deeply rooted Jewish community of Poland.

[See PHOTO-C54 at the end of Section C]

THE ONLY ONE OF TWO-THOUSAND SOULS
WHO HAD THE HONOR OF BEING BURIED

BY MATITIHU ZUKERMAN / HAIFA

Ghetto Demblin, 1942 - In the middle of the room lies the 6 year old Esther-Sara and two candles burn near her head. With the rising of the sun on that spring, though, very dark day, her soul had passed away. She died from a throat sickness because "Jews don't get any prescriptions." This is how the Polish employees of the clinic complained. In an early morning hour that day, my father, Yisrael-Yitzhak, stood and sewed shrouds for his first grandchild and from his eyes tears flowed. I warmed up water for the process of washing her body while the mother, Gitel-Leah, 28 years old, cried at the premature death of her little treasure, Esther-Sara.

[See PHOTO-C55 at the end of Section C]

The 4 year old Raisela, and the 2 year old, Chaim-Ahron, stood at her side and shared her grief. Jews from the burial society conducted the ceremonial washing and soon thereafter we heard an announcement, "Everybody, without exception, every Jew, has to show up at the market place at Rynek, at 12 o'clock. Whoever doesn't show up can be shot on the spot!" We were very, very upset. We didn't know what to do with this little body. Gitel-Leah decided she was absolutely not going to leave without Estherela. We attempted to get her out because they said if you didn't show up there, you were going to get killed, and the appointed hour was closing in. Yosef Shildkroit tore into the house and he urged us to get out of there fast and make our way directly to the market place. He told us that according to what he'd heard, all of those people who had a work card could immediately go back, they wouldn't have to be sent away. "Worry about the living and not the dead!", he screamed and disappeared.

We decided to go. My mother kissed Estherel and went away to the market place. Gitel-Leah cried. She fell to her child. She just couldn't part with her. I wrote a little card out and I placed it there. "Esther-Sara was born in 1936. She died because there wasn't any prescription for Jews. We ask that she be buried along with her Jewish brothers." We left with the weak hope of returning.

As soon as we arrived in the market place, with great vigor they separated people. I on the right, my wife with the children and my father, on the left. But 2,000 souls, children, women, old people, were sent away to the train station and from there to Sobibor as we found out later on. There were some who were just killed right there on the spot, because they didn't come at the exact hour, or in general, just didn't show up at all. I was still capable of working, and returned home. I found my daughter lying just as we'd left her. In the morning I myself buried her in Jewish fashion.

ONLY ME AND MY CHILDREN WERE SAVED

BY ESTHER KAMINSKY

Our family was blessed with many children. We were six daughters and one son to our father Zvi Milgrom and my mother Chana of the Goldfinger family. Until the First World War, father owned a food and spice shop. He supplied groceries to the army in Demblin, and later food for courier pigeons in Poland and Russia. At the break of the First World War, we left our town for Warsaw, but not for long, for in 1916 we returned to Demblin. Five years later, in 1921, my parents left for Warsaw and stayed there. I myself was married in Warsaw in 1920 and lived in that city until 1926, then returned with my husband to Demblin. He owned a warehouse and supplied flour. In 1928 he built a bakery. It was quite a large one, as many troops were stationed in the town, and they were our clients. My husband was not a professional baker, and therefore we employed bakers, as the business was doing well. We bought a nice home, which still exists today. I was rich, had a maid, and we even had a telephone. I lacked nothing, we lived very well. In addition to our bread bakery, we also opened a cake bakery and lived in affluence.

As mentioned earlier, we returned to Demblin because my husband's family lived there. My husband had a large family: a father, mother and sisters. They too owned a bakery and their home was nice and rich. My father-in-law was also a supplier of baked foods to the army, the 82nd Battalion. A large military force was stationed in that town, since there were many military installations there: a fortress, an airfield and camps. This meant that the army needed a lot of supplies. In general, Demblin's Jews were in satisfactory condition. The army, as mentioned, provided livelihood to all the town's residents. Ten kilometers away was the town of Ryki. Its Jews were richer than Demblin's, but our standard of living was higher than theirs. It was said that our standard of living was comparable to that in Warsaw. Our cultural life was also quite well developed. The town had a Hebrew school, Tarbut, and other schools. There were also parties on Jewish holidays, Chanukah, Purim, etc. Political life was also very active in Demblin. The town had Zionist, Revisionist and even Communist parties. One of my daughters joined a religious youth organization, while the other joined Betar [revisionist].

There were about 4,000 Jews in Demblin, and all political movements were represented in the community's executive committee. The chairman was Natan Vanapol, and my husband was his deputy on behalf of the religious. Another committee member was Shlomo Alenblum, a butcher. I do not remember the names of the other members, but the committee had some nine or ten people.

Relations with the Polish neighbors were bearable, although not friendly. My home was on Warshavsky Street, which was predominantly Polish. Jews and Poles lived together. Their children studied at the same schools and there was also business

between them. But when the war broke out, everything suddenly changed. Anti-Semitism was rampant; Polish guards were stationed in front of Jewish shops and tried to provoke us as much as they could. My shop too had Polish guards. They claimed that our name was not Kaminsky (it's my husband's family name), as it is impossible that a Jew will have such a very Polish name! Our argument that my husband inherited the name from many generations ago did not help. The anti-Semites distributed among the army notices in which they wrote that my father was a Jew and that Kaminsky is his assumed name. In those days a Jew was not allowed at all in a military camp. We continued to supply the army as before, but it was now through Polish middlemen.

The war broke on Friday, but a general alert was declared the day before. My father was not conscripted, because he supplied to the military, but our horses were confiscated. The first air raid over Demblin, which had a large military base, took place on the Sabbath morning. In the evening of that same day I fled the city with the children. Only my husband, who had to continue supplying to the military, stayed in town. With me was my daughter Rozhia, who was then 17 years old and is now living in the United States. My second daughter was 14 years old, and lives now in Israel. The third daughter, with whom I live today, was about 13 then. I also had my sons Yisrael and Yehuda. Yehuda perished in 1942.

I arrived at the town of Ryki and stayed there for a week. My husband also went there, because Demblin was bombed very badly. He left everything behind, the flour warehouse, the bakery, and joined us. But it was impossible to stay even in Ryki for a long time. The war was coming closer to us. Ten kilometers away was the town of Stavi that was bombarded heavily, for it had armaments and an ammunitions depot. Therefore, we decided to keep on fleeing. We had no transportation, as our horses had been confiscated. My brother went to Zjelichov, hoping to get us horses so that we all could go there. The bombing continued without a pause. That day 600 people died in Demblin from German bombs. We escaped to a farmer in a nearby village. There we stayed until after Rosh Hashanah. After the holidays the Germans arrived at Demblin and occupied it, and we decided to return to our city. We worked again. We started the bakery, because we had to supply bread to the Germans, and they sent German soldiers who baked at our bakery.

In 1940 my husband was imprisoned by the Germans. Polish neighbors informed the Germans that he was a Jew, that his name was not Kaminsky, and that he continued to bake. The Germans probably thought that the name Kaminsky is only Polish. My husband sat at the Lublin prison for eight months, after which he was released. I could not help him at all during his incarceration. The Jews were forbidden from applying for anything or consulting with any attorney. But he was released and came home. This was a short time before the first deportation of May 1942. But when my husband was away, they confiscated my bakery and my home and drove me to the street. This was on the day in which I went to visit my husband, despite the prohibition. Only the children stayed at home. Then came the Germans, with a Polish

man, and confiscated the flour warehouse, the bakery, the house and everything in it. The children sent me a telegram and I returned immediately. I pleaded that they leave one corner in my house for my family, but it was in vain. Nothing helped. I was forbidden to stay even in the stables. I had stables, and horses, but all was taken.

This happened in Winter 1941, when the Jews were moved to the ghetto, Starovka. There I received an apartment of a Pole. My husband, who was released from prison, came to this house in the ghetto. We stayed in the ghetto about a year. The conditions there were unbearable. Corpses were on the street. Any Jew who tried to leave the place to get some food was shot, and that was the reason for so many bodies. Even a walk was forbidden for Jews. Every step, to a bakery or any other place, was done carefully. The Jews were taken as slave labor, and so were the children. If the children were not taken, the parents would bring them to work. I still had some means of livelihood. But, as mentioned, my father returned a short time before the first deportation. In this deportation my sister Lova Preiss was taken, to the annihilation camp in Sobibor, with all the other Jews in the transport. Only her little child, Yehuda Preiss, survived from her family. It happened on May 6.

On September 1942 the Germans brought to the ghetto Jews from the Czeck republic. Among them were many very wealthy Jews who thought that they would spend the war years in Poland, but they did not survive for very long. Many of them died quickly. They too were taken to work. On September 28 an order was issued, according to which all Jews must leave Starovka and move to Bankova Street. All of us had to move there. In fact, by that time there were not many Jews left in the ghetto. We stayed there only a few days. On November 28 a general hunt was done for the rest of Demblin's Jews. It happened suddenly, in the afternoon. The German army, with many Poles and Ukranians, surrounded the city and ordered that within twenty minutes all Jews should stand at the "slaughter" square. The Jews were in a panic. Most of them obeyed the order, and few fled to the nearby labor camp, in which my children were registered. Only I and my little son Yehuda and my daughter, who was sick, remained at home. Then my son Yehuda was killed. I sent him to his father, who worked for German dentists. They knew that a deportation was planned, and therefore offered my husband that he bring all his belongings to them and they would give him a room to stay in until after the deportation, when he would return to his home. My husband was there, and I sent my little son to him hoping that he would find shelter there, since my son's face looked Polish. I filled his pockets with gold and everything else that I had, and sent him to my husband. But he could not find his father, and could also not return home, and therefore was expelled with the rest of the Jews. My son Yehuda was then just twelve years old.

This was the last slaughter. Those who could, fled to the labor camp. Only the Czech Jews did not grasp the matter. They thought the situation was not as bad as it was.

Suddenly my little daughter Rachel appeared at home. She escaped from the labor camp, and said: "Mother, for God's sake, what are you going to do now? The Poles will rob you of everything you have and then turn you in to the Germans. Come with me to the camp!" She took me, and my elder daughter, who was sick with measles, and my second son, to the camp. Walking in the streets, I saw innumerable dead bodies. But I was not registered as a worker at the camp. The list was closed. That night I slept in the fields; Dr. Preiss slept there too. I had nowhere to hide and therefore went there, although only death was expected there. But I was lucky. I slept there several days without having any documentation.

I stayed there for several days with my little children, my daughter and my son. Every once in a while I found shelter: in the fields, in hotels. Only my husband and older daughters were in the camp. Then my husband asked the work commander, who sent people to work, to accept me and the children to the camp. The man's name was Vishnievski, a folksdeutche [an ethnic German] from Silesia, who spoke Polish. The camp commander was Venkart, and Vishnievski was just a foreman. My husband promised him much. We did not have money, but my husband believed that all that he had given the Germans would be returned to him, and therefore promised Vishnievski all kinds of promises. "I will give you an affidavit that everything that the Germans have will be yours," my husband told him. The man agreed and I was accepted to work at a mill in Demblin. I worked there for thirteen weeks with my children. I faced death every day. The Germans established there a general camp, and they brought there all the things that they robbed from the Jews. The Jewish homes were given to the folksdeutche, and they came everyday to choose furniture and other articles that were taken from the Jewish homes in which they lived. The mill was owned by Germans. Three months later, a decree was issued that forbade Jews from staying in Demblin, not even in a labor camp, in which I was not even registered. Then I was led to the camp I knew. I walked. I left the line one time, and a German soldier kicked me at the waist. I still feel pains there. But when I arrived at the camp, I felt "happy".

There were several hundred people in this camp. There were Jews from Pulaw, Ryki and the area, but most of them were from Demblin. The camp commander was a German Jew from Berlin by the name of Venkart. There was also a German commander, but I do not remember his name. They lived outside the camp. The camp had Jewish police, and no German or Ukrainian guards. But the camp was surrounded by German guards. Despite the presence of Jewish police in the camp, the orders were given by the Germans. They passed them through Venkart. For example, a bathhouse was built in the camp. The order was issued by the Germans, but this Venkart was the one who ran the entire camp. The German soldiers were those who issued the orders.

The tasks in the camp were various. We worked in the garden, laundry, and when trucks arrived with bricks, sand or coal, we unloaded them. The Germans were building there constantly. They also arranged workshops and tailor shops,

shoemaking shops etc. They sent the Jews to do all the hard labor. We were often searched when going to work or returning from work. Once they ordered us to strip naked. Until then people had some valuables with them, but then they took everything. The Germans kept us all night, women, girls and men, all naked.

Many women worked peeling potatoes in the cellars. I was not assigned this work, but some of the people who worked there managed to smuggle some potatoes. We worked mainly in the military work. After building a military building, I was sent with other women to do house cleaning. In fact, I was "happy" doing that work.

The children also worked. All went to work. No one was exempt. All the children worked, including my little ones.

The women lived in a barracks of their own. We were some 280 women there. We slept in bunks. The bunks were cushioned with sawdust and not straw, and we slept very close to each other. It was cold, and we had to use the toilet many times at night because the food was watery. When coming back to sleep, a woman had to go to the toilet again. That is how the nights passed. Our food consisted of "coffee" and two hundred grams of bread for breakfast and soup for lunch. Actually the situation at Demblin's camp had not been that bad. People somehow survived. The tailors and the shoemakers were essential to the Germans: they sewed and made their boots and managed to get some food. But our thoughts were mostly with my children. We left for work at five in the morning and returned in the evening. All we asked for was some more food and a few hours in the bunk.

The camp was supervised by the Wermacht [the German army] and not the S.S. Only when the deportation was executed did the S.S. men appear, but usually they were not seen at the camp. But even without them we saw much blood and murders. Jews were hanged in the camp for various excuses. One Jew who looked in the garbage hoping to find bread was shot on the spot. Another found a piece of soap and was hanged. He was a young boy. The boy remained hanging for three days. His father, watching his son's body, prayed for his soul before going to work. Once a very respectable Jew from Czechia was hanged. His "crime" was that he was caught having money. He tried to reason with them, saying that his son sent him the money for dental treatment. But the excuse did not help. He was shot and his body lay near the gate for three days, covered with snow. And we, on our way to and from work walked by his body. On his chest they put a note that said that they found money on him and therefore he was shot. Once a Jew from Demblin was shot for taking a piece of bread that a German soldier threw from the window.

In this camp, Demblin, we were incarcerated for two years. But when the battles on the Vistula river began in 1944, and the Russians were nearing, we were moved to a camp in Czenstechov. Four camps were there: Rakov, Czenstechovjanka, our camp and another one. During the transport some people who refused to be moved were shot. They tried to flee to the forest, and were shot while running. The Germans

arranged two transports for the move: one for children and the other for adults. The second transport left ten days after the first. The S.S. man ordered them murdered in the cemetery. The children were no longer small, but they were not old enough for work, the Germans said. Therefore they murdered them and saved their bread. But in our transport there were still some children, including the son of Venkart's sister-in-law. Among the women that were brought to Czenstechov was a woman by the name of Sonia Leberbaum. When people were asked about their professions, she said that she was a midwife. The S.S. man in charge ordered her to come to his wife, who was pregnant. Sonia Leberbaum had much influence on this Gestapo's wife. Thanks to her pleading with her, a few Jewish children were spared. Among them was my sister's son, Yehuda Preiss. But the children were not rationed any food. We, the prisoners, saved our little bread from our mouths and gave it to the children. They were very young. The mothers did everything they could for their children's survival.

The conditions in this camp, in which several hundred Jews were incarcerated, were many times worse than at the former one. This camp had many Ukrainians, from Vlassov's army [They served in the Russian army and joined the Nazis when captured as POWs]. We worked at the laundry, myself and three other women. We washed clothes, pressed them and cleaned their houses. Their chief was the Ukrainian Garman. He was the translator and the laundry's manager.

Here, in Camp Czenstechov, I spent eight months. On the last day, January 15, 1945, when I came to clean Garman's home, I found him there. It was the first time that he was home when I came to clean. He asked me, "Woman, which city is closer, Radom or Keiltz? I did not know what to say, because I was frightened. Therefore I replied: "Why are you asking me this, sir? But I think Keiltz is closer." He answered: "I will tell you something, but if you tell it to anyone, you will be killed! We must run away from here, because the Russians are coming. This is the last attack, and we are running away. I am going away, but you will not tell this to anyone!"

This was on Sunday. After my work, I returned to the barracks. It was quiet all around, because all the murderers went to drink in the town. My husband, who worked at a bakery in town, waited for me at the barrack. I asked him, "Chaim, have you heard any news?" "No," he answered. He had not heard anything, and added that "the *stabfeldfabel* did not come to work today." I then told him Garman's words, that the Russians are near and the Germans are running away.

"Prepare dinner," my husband told me.

When I went to the bunk to take the bread, I heard much noise outside. There were shouts and screams, and the two hundred and eighty women filled the barrack in a second. The door was shut. I did not see my husband anymore. The rumor was that the chief commander arrived at the camp. There was much disorder in the camp all night. It seemed that they decided to transport us to another camp. We were awakened at five o'clock and the first transport had already left, with my husband.

I managed to arrive at the home of my employer, maybe he could help. But I could not find him any more. The floor was strewn with things. When I returned to the camp, I heard that my son and Yehuda Preiss' father were taken with the transport, in addition to my husband. I went to work at the laundry and told the women that I wanted to wash my shirts, because there were rumors that we would be taken to Lipsk. I washed my shirt and my hair, and while doing so saw my husband from the window being led in the transport. It seemed that he noticed me too, because he waved at me. I broke into tears. Then one of the German murderers came to me and said, "If you don't stop crying, I will kill you here!" The women around me tried to "comfort" me. They said, "Mrs. Kaminsky, tears will not help, and there is nothing to feel sorry about. Not you, not your children, not your husband and not us will continue to live. This is our last hour."

At noon I went to the police and told an Ukrainian that the iron was out of order and therefore I had to return to the camp. There, women were already standing in lines, ready to go. But disorder was all over. When the children saw me, they were very happy, at least we would go together. The murderers were no longer in the camp. They had fled, and only the Jewish police were in force. The time was now three o'clock in the afternoon. We heard shots in the distance. The Russian army was coming closer to the city. Someone returned from work in the city and said that battles were raging in the city between the Russians and the Germans.

At 11 P.M. the Jewish policemen came with some murderers and ordered us to the yard. They said that they would take us to the old border. One transport of women was on the way, but it remained in the train station for lack of trains to take them further. We stood and waited. They said that they wanted to save us from the Russians. We answered that for us it doesn't matter who will be our killers, they or the Russians. But they themselves were frightened, and therefore thought it sufficient to pass the orders to Jules. This Jules was a Jew, but the worst abomination of humanity, and he was appointed commander of the camp. Venkart, who was commander at the camp in Demblin, was here just another prisoner and held no special authority. Here Jules the monster ruled. He ordered us to leave the barracks, but we already knew that Czenstechov was burning. We remained where we were and the Germans escaped.

At dawn we arrived at the city from the camp. It was freezing cold. I held little Yehuda Preiss in my hand and the doors were closed to us. The Poles locked their doors and did not allow us to enter their homes. We walked the streets until we arrived at a street that was populated by Germans. We found an empty house and entered it. It had all the best things, everything the heart could want, packed and ready to go. It seemed that the Germans did not have enough time to take their things when they suddenly fled. The pots in the kitchen were still warm and the cupboards were full with food. I did not pay too much attention. I thought only about my husband and children. I wanted to be with them. I took only bread for the children. I stayed three weeks in Czenstechov, because there was no possibility of

going home. I arrived at Demblin in a freight train, in a bitter cold. The Poles, our neighbors, thought that no Jews were left, and when they saw a few Jews, they wanted to kill them. I did not have a penny. Russian soldiers lived in my home, but because everybody knew that the house belonged to me, I pleaded with the soldiers to spare me one room. I lived there with my children and with people whom I did not know.

The Pole who received my bakery from the Germans knew that he would have to turn it back to me, and therefore incited Russians, by intoxicating them, to murder me. Indeed, Russians came at night and started giving us trouble. We were unable to defend ourselves, because the room had no door and lock. The situation was worse than in the camp. In the morning, my daughter Rachel decided to go to the N.K.V.D. [Russian security services, later K.G.B.] and tell all. I was afraid, but she was a brave girl and feared nothing. Indeed, her request helped. The Russians arrested the soldiers that broke into our room and ordered the Pole to return the bakery. But then again Poles started threatening me. They sent letters and demanded 10,000 zloty. I did not have such a big sum. Therefore I decided to run away to Lower Silesia and from there to emigrate to Israel.

I was saved, but my husband perished. After being led in the transport for 17 days without food and rest, he died when he reached Camp Mathausen. Only my son, thank God, was saved. When he was with the transport at a train station, he asked an S.S. man to let him go and fetch some water. He was allowed. He fled and on his way someone felt pity for him and gave him a potato. "Mother," he told me, "this potato tasted like the best I ever had." He was then 16-17 years old. He returned alive from this transport, but his father did not, and also Yehuda Preiss' father. My daughter's fiancée also perished. They died in this last transport. My family in Warsaw was also murdered and I don't know even when or how. When the war broke out, I had brothers and sisters in Warsaw. They were all murdered. My parents, brothers and sisters and other relatives, some one hundred persons, all were annihilated by the murderers. Only I and my children were saved. We are the only ones left from the Milgrom family.

SURVIVED WITH MY DAUGHTER

BY CHAYA GOLDFARB-ROZENBERG

In 1939, when the German airplanes began to bombard our district, I and my family ran away from Demblin towards Ryki. My father David was an invalid, and he lived with us. With great effort and stress and strain we took him with us to Ryki with the Germans shooting at us from airplanes. We escaped from there to Adamov.

When the Germans marched into Adamov, we traveled back to Demblin which was already under the rule of the Nazis. My father was very religious, he had a long beard, and the Germans constantly tormented him. The Christians pointed out where the Jews were living as well as where my father was hidden.

My husband Hershel had escaped to Russia. In 1940 he came back to Demblin. And then after, they made a ghetto and drove us from our apartment. We had to get out. We lived two families in a room on the Stavruka. We were there until the 6th of May, 1942, when the first deportation happened. They drove us into the gutter. I stood there with my child of 9 years, who was sick with measles and diphtheria. I saw that the work office was selecting people for work. I understood that those people would remain and work in the city and with my sick child, Nachomai, I ran to those who'd been chosen to work. On the way, while I was running, I got beaten up but I didn't think of that, I just kept on running, and in that way, we were able to save ourselves.

At the same time they sent my husband away, as well as my father, and my whole family. That transport went to Sobibor. We paid Christian acquaintances and sent them to see what had become of the people on the transport. The Christians told us that they weren't able to get to where the people had been taken, but they heard that every one of them had been slaughtered. That was the first transport of Demblin Jews.

In 1942, the time of the Purim fast, my Uncle Mendel, the son of Motel the Shochet, died. My father envied him that at least he'd been able to have a Jewish burial. The same day they took out my cousin Itchek Speckter and three other Jews to the forest of Ryki and they shot them there for no cause at all.

The second deportation came on the 15th of November, 1942. I and my child and sister Shifre, were hidden in a cellar. Afterwards, when we heard people talking in the street, we went outside and saw that the streets were covered with corpses. It wasn't even possible to find a way to walk among them.

The 28th of November 1942, I was working in the fortress. I had a premonition that that day something was going to happen in the town. After work, I didn't go back to town, but I got my child and went to the camp by the airfield. There an acquaintance let me in to sleep. Two of my sister's daughters also worked there, Teshorne and Chana, and a third, Golda, worked by the railroad.

My sister was with us. Afterwards she went away to the partisans in the forest. Afterwards they let us know that the Poles had killed her.

At the rail road, my brother Boaz also worked, as well as his wife Itel with their children Golda, Tshorna, Sheva, Yitzhak, Nechoma, Motel and Chaim. When the Germans transformed Konske-Volye into a "Jewish town", they sent them all away, all those people who had been working at the rail road. The oldest daughter of my sister came then, from Konske-Volye, to Demblin, and to us at the Camp. The German camp commander wanted to let her in to work, but the Jewish camp director drove her away. She had to go back to Konske-Volye. Afterwards the Germans took all the Jews, put them in rail cars and sent them to be burnt. On the transport was my brother with his children and my sister's children. Traveling through Demblin, my sister's daughter Golda threw a letter out of the rail car where she said her farewells to us. At the same time her sister Teshorne was also killed in the Demblin camp.

We lived in the camp until July of 1944, suffered quite a bit and went through quite a bit of anguish and sorrow. We watched as people were hanged and as Jews who had been shot were just left lying on the ground. We got hardened to everything, even to our own fate.

When the Russian army approached our district, the Jewish camp commander sent away a group of Jews to Czenstechov. I and my child and my niece were in the first transport where there were 30 children. When the Germans came to inspect and check the children, my daughter Nechoma stood on her tip toes in order that she should appear to be older. She was only 11 years old then, but she said that she was already 15. And in that way they sent her away with all of the adults and we all went together to the baths. When we came out of the baths there weren't any children left. They'd killed them all.

In Czenstechov we remained until the 16th of January, 1945, when the Russians came. They wanted to take us into Germany, but there weren't any rail cars left for that at that time. And that was our luck. The Germans fled and shortly thereafter the Russians liberated us.

I SUCCEEDED IN SAVING VARIOUS JEWS

BY AVROHMELE ABENSHTAIN / NEW YORK

The 1st of September 1939, the Germans bombarded Demblin. The whole Jewish population ran, some to Ryki, some to Zjelechov and some to Kotzk. In Ryki, 30 Jews fell from German shooting.

I and my family ran away to Zjelechov.

The first day of Rosh-Hashanah the German murderers gathered together all of the invalids in Zjelechov and they put them all in the synagogue and they threw in hand grenades and they blew them all up.

The Jews in town were driven into a mass grave surrounded by soldiers with weapons. The Jews fainted and said their last prayer. Toward night an S.S. officer came and gave us a little talk that we Jews were now in his hands and must do what he orders. Afterwards they ordered us to go home. In the morning the Germans started to go from Jewish house to Jewish house. They gathered up several hundred young men and ordered them to run into a camp. Some of them fell on the way to the camp, among them was a Demblin lad by the name of Lipa Shtamler (Hallel Shtamler's son), he was shot.

There was a lack of food and one had to stand in line for many hours in order to get one little piece of bread. We saw that it was bad and so we decided to go back to Demblin. They ordered us to wear a Star of David so that all the Jews could be recognized. Dressed up in the tallis, they ordered the Jews to dance and fall down in mud puddles.

We had a business that produced shoes and boots. The Germans came into the store and they took anything that they wanted.

I saw that many Jews were being killed by the brutes and I wondered how I could save them or myself. When the Germans came into Demblin they forbid the Jews to have businesses. Yaacov-Laib Buber, Yichzakel Shulman's son-in-law, had a printing shop. He gave it to a Christian but the Poles went around spreading the story that he was really a partner and so they sent him away to Pulaw. Velvel Shulman came to me and he pleaded with me to do something for his brother-in-law, so that he would be able to get back to Demblin. Now, I had acquaintances among the Germans because they came to my place to get shoes and it cost me a lot of effort and a lot of health until I succeeded in seeing that this young man was indeed able to come back to Demblin.

It got harder and harder to find anything to eat. You received very, very little and you had to buy stuff on the black market which cost plenty. My wife went to the baker, Yeshayela, for a little bit of bread. She saw that there was a German standing there with a big stick who wanted to beat Manisel and Yeshayela Bakers, because they were baking a little bit of bread. My wife went to the German and said to him that I have to see him immediately. She knew this German because he used to come and get shoes from me. He came to my place immediately and these two people, the bakers, were saved from death. At night, Yeshayela's daughter came to me. "You gave the German a couple of pairs of shoes in order to save our parents and I want to return the favor to you and I'll pay you anything that you want." Understand that I didn't take anything from her.

Once, a German caught the son of Yosel Puterflam (the butcher), a little boy who had hidden a little bit of meat. He beat the hell out of him and sent him away to Pulaw where they regularly murdered Jews. His mother cried terribly and each day she would show up at the Jewish Council and beg for help. At the Jewish Council, they answered her, "he's already in Bartel's hands". And that was the one who had shot Kannaryenfogel as well as Leizor Teichman. Bartel was a brutal murderer and everybody trembled before him. His mother came to me, she cried and begged that maybe I could do something to help.

I went to the Jewish Council's offices and I asked them for permission to travel to Pulaw in order to rescue him. They advised me against traveling because I would never return alive. Still, I did, I went and traveled there, I went to see Bartel, I said to him that this kid was my cousin and he should give him to me so that he could go back home with me. Bartel had taken lots and lots of shoes from me, as many as he wanted. And it was because of that he wanted to return a favor and he let this kid go.

Once, I went by the Jewish Council and I noticed that Chaya-Aidel Fooks was sitting there and she was crying. I asked her what was going on and she said that they were going to shoot her son Shmuel. They'd sent a bunch of people into the fortress to do work and among them was her son. They worked putting together trousers and she said that at night the Germans came and they stole a whole bunch of pants and then they said that it was the boys who had done it. The Germans came into the town, they grabbed a young man, they beat him and they ordered him to say that Shmaiya was one of the ones who had stolen the pants because he worked there. And so they threw Shmaiya in prison. The Jewish Council couldn't do anything because the Germans said they had a witness, this kid who had been beaten up, who had seen how Shmaiya had been the thief.

Listening to this story I couldn't think of a way out and I thought, what am I going to do for this kid? A half hour later a German walked into my store and he asked for 2 pairs of shoes for his wife. I packed them up very, very beautifully, so that he could send them back to Germany. I told him that in the prison there was a

cousin of mine and I assured him that he was not a thief because I knew him very well and the whole thing must have been a mistake. I pleaded with him to help me get this kid out. The German went to the prison and he let Shmuel Fooks out, thanks to me, he's still alive and he's today in Israel.

A lot of times, though, I pleaded on behalf of people and everything that I did came to absolutely not.

One time I ran into Mates Sherberg in the street. He told me that they'd taken his wife and children away and that he remained along with his son Hersh-Velvel who was in one of the camps where everybody ended up getting killed. He cried and he begged for me to do something on his behalf. I just couldn't rest. I went to the work inspector and I convinced him to let Hersh-Velvel out of the camp. I went back to my house in the ghetto and he remained there like our own child. When there was an order given by the county chief of Pulaw to the local Demblin authorities that we should be sent away to Pulaw, Hersh-Velvel came along with us.

We were in the camp in Pulaw. There were Pulaw Jews there and Jews from Konske-Volye. Everybody there was just waiting for death. We suffered much. My wife got sick with hepatitis. My mouth got swollen. I saw that I didn't have anything to lose so I went to the county headman and in the process risked my life, because no Jew dared go into the street. But I was lucky because this official was not there, just his assistant, and I asked him to send me with my family back to Demblin, to the ghetto, in order that I and my wife could recover. He allowed us to do that and said that if we were called, we would have to come back immediately.

I arrived in the ghetto, there was a Dr. Kava, the Jewish doctor who took care of us and made us better.

Once, traveling to Pulaw, I learned that there was a little boy in prison there, for many days already, and he was hungry. I risked my life and sneaked to the bars and threw in some bread to him and saved him from a death from hunger. The little boy's name was Mendel Federbush and he lives today in New York. When we meet he says that the bread was like an image before his eyes and that, on that dark night, the bread shined like a brilliant sun.

We organized a hospital in the ghetto, in the house of a Christian, by the name of Pominansky. We brought 5 boys from Pulaw who were sick from typhus in order that they could be healed in our hospital. They were very, very ill. I and my wife cooked for them a couple of times a day, something very light to eat. In that way we were able to get them back on their feet. They didn't know how to thank us. They were happy that somebody would interest themselves in their welfare. They got better but later when the deportation from Ryki occurred, the German

murderers with a local official by the name of Oystriyak and his helpers came into the hospital and viciously shot the young boys in their beds.

I remember how my sister's daughter Leah Yamovitch, on a beautiful, bright day, walked by my store and she carried a little bit of a potato in her basket. She had a husband, a son, and a daughter. The ethnic-German Blumkin saw her. His murderous blood got worked up and he began to beat her with the butt of his rifle until she lay at his feet half dead. We sent her away to the hospital in Pulaw and I sat by her death bed. She took me by the hand and said, "I'm dying", and she squeezed my hand. Her husband, Chaim-Yitzhak Yamovitch, and their son David, were killed. Just a daughter, Aida, who lives today in Ramat-Gan in Israel, remains alive.

MURDERED AFTER THE LIBERATION

BY AVROHMELE ABENSHTAIN / NEW YORK

The family of Shmuel-Nachum Luxemburg was a well-known family in Demblin (there were three sons and two daughters). It was a family of substance. Shmuel-Nachum was a tailor. He sewed things for the military.

Before the War, the oldest son got married and a child was born to him. When the War broke out, the child was 3 years old.

The family did not remain together long. A part of the family was sent away to Auschwitz. After being tormented in various camps, the mother, Latshe, and daughter Gitel, the son Avram with his wife Frieda, came to Demblin, after the liberation. They thought that there they could get settled.

They lived in a tiny room. But they didn't live there long. On a certain occasion at night when the son had disappeared just for a minute from the house, in came the A.K. They murdered the whole family. When he came back, he found his family lying dead on the floor. One can not imagine what a horrible blow that was for him.

Jews were even afraid to go to the funeral, because their terror of the A.K. was so intense.

Soon after the funeral, the son left Demblin. For a long time afterwards, he was sick. But, time heals all wounds. He is now in Sweden with his wife and child.

JEWISH RESISTANCE IN THE GHETTO AND THE CAMP

BY SHAVTI PERELMUTER / TEL AVIV, BATZERON

At the end of 1941, some Jewish youths succeeded in putting themselves in contact with a teacher from the Polish public school in a little town about 20 kilometers from Demblin. This Pole was recognized as a communist from before the War. The Jewish boys asked him to help them in their efforts to establish a partisan group in the forest of Kotzker. The teacher promised to give a reply in a few days.

The Jewish boys in the meantime began to interest themselves in getting weapons. Afterwards a messenger came from the teacher and told them that according to a decision made by the committee that was in charge of the partisans in the area, they had to provide a typewriter for the Polish underground. We knew that buying a machine was completely out of the question. We decided to steal the typewriter from the Judenrat office.

There was a curfew from 7 in the evening to 6 in the morning in place in the ghetto. Still, one of our group managed to sneak in at midnight to the Judenrat office, broke the door in and stole the machine, which, the next morning, found itself in the hands of the teacher.

When our group was ready to leave the ghetto, we waited for a sign from the Polish underground and then we learned that the Germans had uncovered the ruling Committee with the teacher at the head of it and shot everybody. So, from our great plan to escape the ghetto came absolutely nothing.

B

After liquidating the ghetto at the end of September 1942, the Jews who remained, about 900 of them, were housed in barracks near the airfield and had to work quite hard there. Besides that site a certain number of Jews were parceled out to smaller work groups in private German companies, like "Shultz", "Schwartz", "Lentz". There was also the group of 300 forced laborers employed at the train center and they were deported in 1943 to the camp at Poniatov. We knew that at the camp near the airfield there were serious attempts to get weapons, to organize escapes and to create an underground organization.

C

In our camp, there were 50 Jews from Preschov, Czechoslovakia, who had been deported from there to the Demblin ghetto. Some of them still maintained correspondence with Christian friends in their old homes. On a certain evening, 3

German officers, later it became known that they were actually Slovaks or Hungarians, came into the camp and after looking at people's documents they took 4 Jews from Slovakia who were taken back to Czechoslovakia.

D

In our camp there were one hundred Jews from the nearby town of Ryki. In the Winter of 1944 a group of 10 young people from Ryki organized and succeeded in escaping from the camp. They took weapons with them. As a punishment, the Gestapo came into the camp and made a very thorough search of all the people who were prisoners there and took money from them, gold and food. Afterwards they shot the very well thought of Jew from Preschov, Feit.

Afterwards we learned that the 10 escapees succeeded for 3 to 4 months in hiding out. Afterwards they were murdered by the A. K. (Armia Krajowa - Military Organization of the Polish Overseas Regime in London, which used to murder Jews who were trying to hide out.)

E

In the summer of 1944 two pals of mine asked me to try to help them get a revolver. But first we needed to get some money together. They suggested that we should begin the collection as if it were for people who were in need. In the morning I with another friend went to our work. On the second day, a camp policeman suddenly appeared with dogs. We heard a familiar order barked out, "All men stampede into the outside for line-up!" We stood there on the open grounds and the head brute ordered that everybody who's first name was Shmuel should step out in front of the line-up. Ten Jews did so and the police smacked them around and then took them away. Three hours later they came back, bloodied and tortured. Afterwards we learned the reason for all of this.

The little boy Nateck who had contacted a Pole about the possibility of getting a hold of a pistol fell into German hands and after a very long third degree and torture he told them that a certain Shmuel in the camp who's family name he didn't know, ordered him to ask about getting a hold of a gun. The murderers went after the 10 Shmuels for that reason but they didn't find the right one among them, the 11th one, who had been described to them. The police employed by the Germans together with the Jewish camp police began to look for yet another Shmuel, Shmuel Locks, is what we began to call him and found him in a moment when he was attempting to jump over the fence which was around the camp. This Shmuel put up a very heroic fight against the people who were trying to capture him. He beat them up, smashed them over the head, and wouldn't let himself be taken. It was only when they got a dog, which was able to snare him, that he was overtaken.

Afterwards the camp commander said that when the Germans finally got him, that Shmuel fell in a very heroic fashion.

On a Winter night in 1944, a Jewish camp policeman suddenly ousted us out of bed. After realizing great terror, we asked him what was going on. He answered that I had been called to the camp commander Venkart. This was 11 at night. You have to understand that I was very, very upset and they were really rushing me, told me to make it snappy because Venkart was waiting for me and they didn't want me to ask any more questions, they just wanted me to get there.

I pulled on a half torn jacket and put on my wet shoes and I was so rushed I put my right shoe on my left foot, and my left shoe on my right foot. Angel [the policeman] was disgusted when he saw me with two different shoes on and screamed, "Faster!". To tell the truth, in general, I didn't really have much problem with the Jewish commander of police or with the other camp police. I never asked anything from them, I never asked them for any favors, but they didn't go out of their way to make life miserable for me.

At that point I put on my wooden shoes, I remember running very, very quickly and trying to find what this camp boss Venkart wanted with me in the middle of the night. Some kind of new order or restriction, some new danger that was upon us. But I wasn't among those people in whom he generally confided, to who he told his secrets. And so I was absolutely dumb founded, I didn't know what he wanted from me.

I put all my clothes on, such as they were, and walked over to my friend, Yosel Shildkroits' bed and I told him the news of this unforeseen sorrow that seemed to be upon us. I was even more astonished to find he was already up and dressed and he told me that he'd also been woken up by the same guy Angel, and he too knew absolutely nothing about why we were being called.

So in Venkart's room there was a gathering of 10 people, because Venkart used to really like to have partner's in crime. He lay in bed. As soon as all of us came in, and apparently the two of us were the last ones to arrive, Venkart began.

"All right, everybody who I called is here now. And I ask all of you who are gathered here to believe me when I tell you that everything that I'm going to tell you now shouldn't stop you from telling me exactly what you think without fear, just let your conscious be your guide. But the main thing is you are compelled to keep what I'm going to tell you a secret as well as the decision which you're going to be partners to. Although I have a cold and the doctor ordered me to stay in bed for two days, I still found it necessary to call you here in order to share with you some information about things that are being planned by Jews in this camp and the results of these actions can be very, very serious, and they can even threaten the very existence of the camp."

All of our ears were perked up. The tension among the people who were gathered there was extremely great. Venkart told us that he had received confidential information that Meyer Kushner with his brother Moshe and Gershon Albek, were planning to escape from the camp in one of the coming evenings. But before escaping they wanted to murder him, Venkart and the German officer who was second in command. Of course, when the escape of three Jews from the camp combined with the murder of a German officer, the officials in charge from the Wehrmacht of the camp could easily liquidate all of the Jews in the camp. And without a doubt, the first victims would be the 30 children who were among us in the camp. Venkart suggested that we should agree that he should talk to the German commander and ask him to send these three Jews who were planning this deed to another camp so that they will spare the Jews in this camp the collateral damage that would come to them in revenge.

From the words of Venkart it became apparent to us who were gathered there that all of us were totally against his suggestion. Avram Rosenfeld explained his opposition and he said that to turn the Jews over to the Germans is just the same as giving them a death sentence.

Joseph Shildkroit said that all of this talk about people running away and killing people sounded pretty flimsy to him and just on the basis of this heresy, it was ridiculous to turn people over to German hands.

And I myself was against Venkart's suggestion. I added to the responses of the other people that even if it were true that they planned to escape in this way, we have to remember that we're all sentenced to death in the first place. We were the last Jews remaining in the whole Lublin region. All of the surrounding work camps had already been liquidated. And who knows, maybe if these people did escape they would remain alive to be witnesses to all the horrors that we'd undergone and how we ourselves would be murdered.

After hearing our thoughts Venkart said that he would withdraw his suggestion because there wasn't any enmity amongst us, but he did ask us to form a group which would every night guard the camp to make sure those that had been accused couldn't carry out their plan.

Those who opposed the first suggestion also were opposed to guarding the camp. But the rest who were among us said OK, that they would each night supply two people who were among us to stand watch.

I don't know how well they actually kept this promise that they made, but the main thing is that the Jews who Venkart wanted to turn over to the German commander survived the War.

THE MARTYR LIKE WAY OF YECHIEL BANTMAN

RECORDER: ABA BANTMAN / PARIS

To the memory of our sister Miriam, her husband Shlome and children Leah and Ahron - who died at the hands of Nazi murderers.

ABOUT OUR FAMILY AND MYSELF

I, Yechiel Bantman, was born in Demblin in the year of 1908. In January of 1925, my father died suddenly of a heart attack in the fullness of his life. My mother and grandmother, Faiga-Blime, as well as my brothers, Meir and Mordechai, remained without a way to stay alive. A year passed and our brother, Aba, left Demblin and made his way to Paris. He sent me the necessary papers and I arrived in the capital of France. Here I began to learn the trade of being a tailor. The city of light, famed for its museums, its great boulevards, its night life, was in the first years, for me, a great confinement and the scene of a lot of hardship and suffering. From 16 to 20 hours a day, I was virtually welded to my sewing machine and that in an era when there were very strict laws on the books and the police carried out all kinds of brutality on people who were immigrants or illegal workers who first of all, in this case, turned out to be Jews from Poland.

THE OCCUPATION OF FRANCE

In the Summer of 1940, Hitler's hoards invaded and Marshal Peten and Laval capitulated quickly to the German army. In October of the same year, the first anti-Jewish proclamation was issued, "All Jews had to come with their passports to the police station and register there." In January of 1941, there was a new order. The identity cards and food rationing cards had a special stamp put on them which was, "Jew". Also, among the French population there were oppressive measures imposed which demoralized people and created a sense of hopelessness. Only among the Jews, the situation was truly desperate. The Newspapers, the posters on the wall, never seized to try to heat up the population against the Jews in their midst. Many French people began to collaborate with the Germans.

The Winter of 1941 was a very cold one, but even more desolate and cold was to be found in the hearts of Jews. Even the coming spring couldn't drive away the dark, heavy clouds which hovered over the heads of the Jews in occupied France. We waited for a miracle.

Little by little, I worked at my sewing machine until the 13th of May, 1941 when I received a blue card from the police to show up at 7 o'clock in the morning with my belongings and said that family members could accompany me there or a friend.

After a sleepless night I went at the appointed hour to the police station. It didn't take long and hundreds of Jews with great fear and questioning in their eyes looked at each other, not knowing what was going to happen. About 9 o'clock we were taken down to the cells in the basement and put behind bars and separated, fathers and children, women and men, sons and parents. Each of these unfortunate people thought, "What's going to become now of those who are closest and dearest to me? Who's going to take care of their needs? Who's going to cheer them up in the darkest hour? And who's going to protect them from all of the dangers that lurk around them?"

The ones who accompanied us, our wives and children, and the men as well, were ordered to go home, and to bring for the people who had been interned, a blanket with some bread. Half past 11 o'clock, they took us out of the cells in the cellars and put us into trucks and they took us to the train station, Oysterlitz, very heavily guarded by Germans, and French collaborating police. At the train station thousands of Jews who had already been rounded up were to be found. It was a sea of heads. Until the order came, "Into the cars!"

And this was emphasized with blows and screams. And in this way the unfortunate Jews were stuffed into the cars in which, under normal circumstances, cattle would be carried. After traveling about 80 kilometers from Paris, we arrived in Bon-La-Rolon. On the ramp they separated us into 2 groups, one to Pitivye and the second to Bon-La-Rolon.

IN A FRENCH CAMP

About 4,000 internees, we found ourselves in the camp at Bon-La-Rolon, which was a wooden barrack surrounded by barbed wire and was very carefully guarded by police. They didn't take us to work there. There was no work to do. Every internee had a right to receive a package from home. But when he actually got his hands on it there was always something missing, either a third of what had been sent or a half of what had been sent.

In the beginning of July 1942, half of our camp was ordered to put its stuff together and they sent the Jews away in the direction that we couldn't figure out. Fifteen days later, the second half of the group was also told to get ready, to leave, and I was among them.

Again the ramp along the rail platform, the terrible cars, the German police who at that point took over from the French police. The doors were shut and we remained inside with our terror and fear in the sealed wagons, without water and without food. Human needs had to be taken care of right where we were and more than one of us ended up wetting our dried out lips with our own urine.

IN AUSCHWITZ

Our train arrived in Auschwitz camp about 4 o'clock in the morning. The doors on both sides of the wagon were opened wide for the half alive people who were suffering intensely. They were driven with rifle butts, whips and other kinds of batons, faster and faster, into the place where everybody was sorted out. The packages we'd taken with us, of course, had to remain behind in the car along with lots of dead people who weren't able to survive the horrifying journey which had taken 3 full days.

Here we encountered, once again, the first group from Bon-La-Rolon, and everybody from the camp at Pitivye. In Auschwitz there were also Germans imprisoned and Austrians and Ukrainians and Poles and Russians.

After the first segregation, they drove us into the barracks. Everybody received a little bit of canvas with a number written on it which the next day was tattooed on our arms. From this point forward we would be just numbers and nothing more. But one letter, H, adorned our backs. I was separated out into a group of 12 people which was called Kisen-Grave. At 6 o'clock in the morning we were ordered to get up. The Kapo, with his helpers, ran from bunk to bunk and would smack us over the heads and backs with sticks in order to drive us out of our hard beds and out to our slave labor. At the place where everybody had to gather, everybody received a little tin with a little bit of lukewarm tea and a very, very measly ration of bread. After screaming, "Get going!", all of the people from the different barracks began to march out to their various work assignments. At the gate there stood an orchestra which played marches and the slaves had to march to the beat in military style.

My group was given out a Kapo who was a German, and an S.S. man with a machine gun and a dog. After marching 10 kilometers we were ordered to stop and dig trenches for sewer pipes. This work was accompanied by blows and shots. Around 12 o'clock there was a whistle and they brought the meal, lunch. We stood up in a line with our little tin cups and everybody received a ladle full of this watery soup in which there swam little bits of radish or rutabaga. After an hour of resting, the Kapo started to whack people over the head again, driving them to work. Those who fell dead from the blows or the S.S. man's bullets had to be dragged back to the camp by the people who remained alive. Why? So

they could show up at the roll call because the same number of people had to be counted at the roll call, it didn't matter whether they were dead or alive.

THE DEATH FACTORY DEVELOPS

When I arrived at Auschwitz there were just 3 barracks, but the enormous space around, which was bordered with electric wire and barbed wire, promised that this emptiness would, undoubtedly, quickly be filled up with construction of one kind or another. And that's exactly what happened. Every day transports arrived at the camp, full of people, who had been brought from every corner of Europe. The procedure of emptying out a transport once it got to Auschwitz was always exactly the same. The heavy doors of the rail cars were opened up on both sides, S.S. brutes would stand with their sticks and their whips and they'd really give it to the unlucky victims who came out of the cars. Tens of dead people were taken out of the cars. These were the victims of the journey who had endured days upon days inside hermetically sealed rail cars without water or anything to eat, without air, in a frightfully crowded space. The arrival at Auschwitz was marked by orders to stand up in lines while a doctor from the S.S. carried out his selection. With a little gesture of his hand, he indicated who went straight to the gas chamber and crematorium, and who would remain alive for the time being, though in the hideous conditions at Auschwitz.

Frightful scenes were played out when children were torn away from their parents, even babies who were nursing were torn from their mother's breasts. Some of the mothers fought like lionesses against this brutality, but their struggle always ended up in a quick death. How much brutal sadism the Germans displayed in the murder of little babies!?

The part of the transport that was directed to the left was sent to the gas chamber. It appeared to be a barracks covered with tar paper, with two tiny little windows. During my arrival at Auschwitz there was just one gas chamber. But with time the death industry developed to such a scale that 5 gas chambers were able to take care of thousands of people on a daily basis. There was also a great increase in the number of barracks. It didn't take very much time before there were 40 barracks, each in a row of 20, in each barrack 1,500 internees were kept. With time the neighboring camp, Birkenau, was included in Auschwitz.

MY SAVIOR LUDWIG

After 3 weeks of being in the camp, on a specific day they ordered us to undress, take off all of our clothes, they shaved our heads, and they shaved as well, all the other places we had hair on our bodies, took our clothes and our shoes and everybody received one of the striped outfits of the camp with wooden clogs

instead of shoes. The cold water without soap did very little to improve our hygienic situation. Sunday, on the day of rest, we had to delouse ourselves.

In September I became sick with typhus and I lay in a terrible condition and given the fact that this took place in the horrible conditions of Auschwitz, it is only thanks to my block commander, the Pole, Ludwig, that I was able to stay alive. In civilian life he was a dancer in a ballet. He found he had been thrown into Auschwitz as a political prisoner. I have no idea what it was that I did, or for what reason he showed me so much sympathy, but as soon as he found out that I was seriously ill, he ordered 2 brothers by the name of Bodnik from Paris, one day when they were returning from work, to, at the roll call, hold me up on my feet. When the order came out for people to sound off their numbers, he told them to pull my cloak over my face and told them to shout out my number when it was necessary.

My medical crisis lasted for 12 days, there was one occasion when Ludwig didn't allow me to go to work, but he hid me under some straw in the barracks so that I wouldn't be discovered in an inspection. He was also able to make sure that I got an aspirin and a little bit more bread. In September of 1942 Ludwig got me a job in a working group of tin workers who covered the roofs. I spent the whole day sitting on the roof, banging nails, in a section of the camp and the conditions were much, much better than the previous work that I had.

THE BLOODY SPECTACLE

New Year's 1943. The brutes in Auschwitz decide that they want to welcome the New Year with a little bit of a kind of celebration. They wanted to have their wives and women friends observe the bloody spectacle. An order came down. The order was that from certain barracks people had to march towards the headquarters, that is to say, near the gate where the S.S. people and some women were sitting at little tables, drinking beer and snacking. The orchestra was playing. One murderer gave the order that an inmate should take off their camp jackets and then put them on again backwards, that is to say, they should button them up on their backs. After that people had to pour sand into their neighbors jackets and with this baggage, the unfortunate Jew had to run, driven by blows from sticks and whips. The victim ran around in a circle and after that, he had to pour out the sand by the toilets and come back. At that point they filled up their jackets once again with sand. And in this little game thousands of Jews took part and in the process hundreds of them were tortured to death with blows or just shot on the spot to the laughter and pleasure of the Germans and their acquaintances. The next morning we had to bury all of the victims in a mass grave.

RUSSIANS AND GYPSIES IN AUSCHWITZ

In the month of February 1943, a work group of 150 Ukrainians disarmed their guards from the S.S. and they escaped. The whole camp was ordered to come out for a roll call. Two days and two nights we stood outside in a bitter cold. Understand that many victims fell during this roll call, until they caught up with 3 of the men who had escaped. They brought them back. Each one had been bound to two pieces of wood, in the form of a cross. We all had to witness the execution and watch them led up to the gallows.

On a certain day there came an order, "Shut down the barracks!". All the barracks were shut down. We didn't dare even to look out of the windows, but there was always somebody who was curious and willing to take the risk, and one of them crept up to the window and saw how they were leading a whole transport of Russian prisoners of war into the gas chamber.

On the next day we were assigned as a work group to sort out the clothes of the Russians. We found letters from wives, children and parents, photographs, documents. On their clothes there was an identification which said, R.K.G., or Russian prisoner of war. When the German guard was looking the other way, we succeeded in pulling on a pair of boots from one of the Russian soldiers and then we would let our pants fall down to cover the boots. If I'd been caught in this kind of theft, there's no question that I would have been shot on the spot.

In Auschwitz there were certain separate barracks for gypsies and whole sections of other barracks for them and there were whole families of gypsies there, with wives and children, but not for long. They also waited for the gas chamber and crematoria. The first transport of gypsies originated in Germany itself. When they were led to the gas chambers the screams of the unfortunate ones ripped into heaven, but nobody could do anything to help them.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN FRANCE

Once when I was at work cleaning the courtyard and the paths in the camp, I noticed a large group of French women who were assigned to work digging sewer canals, not far from the toilets. I wanted to just ask one of the women a question, and I said, "What's happening in France?" And all of a sudden a woman guard appeared right next to me with an automatic rifle in her hand and she ordered, "Come over here!" I was terrified as I went over to her and she asked me angrily what I was talking about. I answered her, "Nothing really". She ordered me to go into the toilet with her and there she gave me a cigarette to smoke. She wrote down my number and she ordered, "Get out of here!". Coming back to my barracks I was certain that my life had run its course and sure enough, that evening a messenger came running and called out my number and ordered me to

come to the headquarters. I left my portion of bread behind to a pal in the barracks. I said good-bye to people who I was close to and I said farewell with the certainty that I was going to meet my death. At headquarters the female guard was waiting for me. She ordered me, in a stern tone, to go with her, she led me into a room, and she gave me an order in an especially high, harsh voice that I should start to clean up that room to make it spotless. When I grabbed a brush and a rag in my hand, she said to me in a very gentle tone, I should sit down at the table, and she brought me a meal fit for a king. In the conditions of Auschwitz, one could only dream of eating like that. She indicated in a very civilized way that when I was going to go out, she was going to give me a little bit of meat and cigarettes. I explained to her that if I go into the barracks and I am discovered to possess these things, it would mean a minimum of 25 or 50 lashes, that is if I didn't get shot on the spot. She said, "Well, it's worth the risk as long as you're able to eat and smoke."

JEWISH KAPOs

In Auschwitz camp I had the opportunity to be exposed to see and to really hear and know the behavior of the block commanders and their helpers. The commander of Block 27 was a certain Greenboim, and he was from Warsaw. He distinguished himself with his brutality towards Jews. There was another one from Warsaw, Yosela and Laibeshel from Radom.

Once, when I was cleaning an area not far from the ramp between 2 cars which had arrived from France, I noticed my Uncle Shabotai, who had been ordered to go to the right side. I was sure that I'd be able to find him in one of the quarantine barracks. The next day I went to Barracks No. 8, where Laibeshel was the Kapo. And to my question, if I could see my Uncle, he gave me a very sinister answer, which was that I can't interrupt him now because he's in prayers, Mincha. When he got to another prayer, Shmone-Asera, Laibeshel's answer was that your Uncle is just an old *kacker*, and he wouldn't live long anyway.

THE HELL OF WARSAW

At the end of April 1943, the French Jews in Auschwitz received an order to fall in for roll call. After going out and getting arranged in lines, we were asked who wanted to volunteer for a transport. About 500 men wanted to get out of the Auschwitz death factory. We received a half a loaf of bread each, a little jug of water and got into the rail cars on the same track which had brought us here, but this time we were traveling away from Auschwitz.

The next morning, very early, we arrived at Prager station. They took us from the station in trucks to the Jewish quarter of Warsaw. Who is capable of describing

what our eyes beheld after the hell of the Warsaw ghetto and after the suppression of the heroic uprising of Jewish fighters against Hitler's brutal army?

Our task was to clean up the ghetto, to destroy the remaining walls, clean the bricks which the Poles would then take away in their horse drawn wagons. We also had to bang on the cellar walls to see if they were empty or not, or if there were places where there was hidden quantities of food or jewelry and money. At 27 Volinske, we actually did uncover, under a wall, a whole warehouse full of products that you couldn't have seen otherwise. In it were clothes and shoes and boots. We were able to make little deals with the Poles who would come into the ruined ghetto and what we'd do is we'd trade them some little thing of value that we were able to stash away, and in return from them we would get cigarettes or bread or other things to eat, because our one and only striving was to have something to eat. Had we had enough to eat, then the situation might have been different.

Daily there were fresh transports coming in to Warsaw from Auschwitz, of French Jews, in order to clean up the ghetto. There were 4,000 Jews at that point during a period of 8 months.

The confusion which began to overtake the Germans, the sounds of bombardments and artillery fire from both sides of the Vistula promised that the front was closing in, and with it the possibility of our liberation. The German bandits, though, didn't want to resign themselves quite so quickly to the loss of their slaves. An order came to march. The first day we made 30 kilometers, without a drop of water or anything to eat. Along the way the brutes did everything that they could to cause more victims to fall. When we arrived at night to a river and some unfortunate people decided that they would bend down to take a drink and still their thirst, the Germans opened fire and the river ran red with blood. I mean, half of the people were shot down at that point.

When we arrived at the train station they locked us in wagons and after another half a day of traveling in horrible conditions, we arrived at Dachau. A thousand or 1,200 of worn out Jews were stuffed into barracks No.16 and 27. For about 2 months we were there in quarantine, we didn't work, a sign that the Third Reich had come to the beginning of the end. They didn't know what to do with us. They didn't even know how to put to work their legions of worn out, tortured slaves. After that they drove us on foot to Karlsfeld, 6 kilometers from Dachau where we began to work in an underground bunker, far from a forest. Since our employer was a company "Todt", we had added to the standard pathetic little food rations that we usually got in the camp, a little ration of one cigarette a day. The cigarettes we bought in the canteen which was open every 10th day.

The dogs who watched us used to receive far better food than we. When the dogs had finished their meal, we used to get their leftovers, bones, and that would still our hunger.

A MEETING WITH PEOPLE FROM DEMBLIN

When the allied armies came into Germany many thousands and thousands of imprisoned Jews were liberated, not only Jews but other people too. Among the transports of liberated people, I once recognized my fellow towns people -- Chana Goldberg and the 2 sons of Moshe Faiges. I took them into a barrack and I hid them until their group traveled away. Together we lived to see the day of liberation, the 9th of May, 1945, when a group of American troops came into Dachau and we were set free.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JEWISH DEMBLIN

BY DR. KALMAN PARIS / PETACH-TIKVA

1

At the outbreak of the War on the first of September, 1939, I, as a veterinary doctor was mobilized to supervise the slaughter of animals for the military. There were also butchers from Demblin who were mobilized, Avram Mendel, Chaim Puterflam, Avram and Simcha Ainshidler and others, and we went to work at the slaughter house.

The first day of the War was very peaceful throughout Demblin. In the afternoon though, the German airplanes came around. They were photographing the Demblin airfield.

In the morning we worked again at the slaughter house, but we had to leave work because of 2 bombing raids. One bomb fell not far from the slaughter house in an air raid shelter where Poles were hiding themselves and that became a mass grave.

Of course we worried tremendously about our families, but during the bombing we didn't have any chance to leave and go back to town.

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon the bombing began again. The bombs hit a gasoline station, stores and hangers.

In the evening we went home, packed up the few things that we had, and with a wagon made our way towards Ryki. That same night we traveled on a bus toward Lublin to my wife's parents. Sunday in the morning I traveled with the bus to Demblin to my job. The butchers had made accommodations for themselves as well and it helped.

Friday, the 8th of September, in the evening, riding my bicycle from Ryki to Demblin I saw artillery fire coming from Ryki mountain on the other side of the Vistula. I turned my bike around and rode to Lublin through a lot of burned out destruction. The road was full of retreating Polish troops. Outside Lublin I had to wait because the Germans were bombing the city. When it became dark I went into Lublin and I found my near and dear ones. Avrom Guthartz also came to Lublin with his family. When the Germans took Lublin we went together back to Demblin.

2

Since our apartment had been taken over by German soldiers the Guthartz family took us in.

In Demblin we found Jews who had been wounded by the bombardment of Ryki. After the bombardment of Demblin, all inhabitants had fled toward Ryki. Some had remained there and some had gone to Zjelechow. In Ryki, 500 people died as a result of the bombardment. My wife came to an understanding with the German doctors at the airfield and they extended help to the wounded Jews. They were able to transport the wounded people to a hospital and I myself appealed to the commander of the airfield about this matter. He sent me in a military vehicle to Pulaw but there the hospital had been damaged. He agreed to send them to a hospital in Radom, but his officer handed him a list of the wounded. I understood that everything was lost at that point but I looked at the list with him. The officer said all these people were Jews. Nevertheless, they sent the doctors from the airfield in a military ambulance to the Jewish hospital in Radom and after awhile the Jews who were there came back and they had been given treatment and made better. In the meantime the Germans left our apartment and we moved back in.

At the end of October the Germans destroyed the synagogue in Demblin. Our Jews began to return to Demblin. When people who returned began to establish some kind of normal life in the town, Blazjetsky ordered me to resume the activity of the slaughter house. The German military killed cattle for their own use as well. They organized a military field slaughtering detail which consisted of 22 soldiers with a military veterinarian running it. With these conditions it was impossible to kill animals through ritual slaughter in the slaughter house. The butchers turned to me asking for permission to slaughter in a kosher fashion under my supervision. I came to an understanding with Blazjetsky and he agreed. Later what happened is that somebody stole a cow from a Christian. She went to the authorities and told them about this and they carried out a search of the Jewish butchers and they found some meat there. When I learned about this I went into hiding. The butchers were taken before the police officials, they were beaten up and that was the end of the matter.

3

At this time (October 1939), a huge military convoy, a German division, passed through Demblin. For a whole day and a night, the house shook. In the morning you could hear shooting in the distance and it lasted for two days. On the third day we saw four Polish prisoners and many horses which the Polish division, under the leadership of General Klayberg, had pulled back from the advancing Soviet military which had taken the eastern part of Poland. So they retreated, but in the process of retreating, they ran into the Germans in Kotzk, where there was a big battle, with many casualties on both sides. I and the German veterinarian looked over the transport of captive men and horses and he blurted out, "Oh God, what beautiful horses the Poles have".

(We should recall that in Kotzk, in 1794 the Pulawer, Yoselevitch fell. He was a soldier who led a Jewish regiment during Kotzk's revolt against the Russians and you can find there a monument to the Jewish hero.)

As an official working for the local authorities I received special permission to go out at night. Once a military patrol encountered me at night and wanted to see my papers that described my privilege. I gave it to the guy and the soldier screamed, "Oh God, it's already dark". The electric lights had already been damaged so they weren't working.

The soldiers came to town to take Jews to forced labor. A delegation from the Jewish community made an appeal to the Commidant and were able to work out a system with him that the Jewish community would provide the required number of workers. The Jewish community charged them for the work, and from this work there was a possibility of bringing home a little bread, a little bit of food, and a little bit of firewood. There were many people who didn't have work. Those who were active in organizing this work plan were, Leizor Teichman, Yosef Kannaryenfogel and others.

They opened the schools and Jewish children also studied there. Soon though, there came an order that forbid Jewish children from going to school.

At the order of the provincial headman from Pulaw, I was relieved of my responsibilities, I lost my job. Mrs. Yusef and Parotshnik Goldberg lost their pensions at this time.

There had already been established civilian offices. In Pulaw, the local boss was a guy named Brondt. His helpers were the ethnic Germans, Geda and Bartel. The mayor of Pulaw was an ethnic German lawyer named Sheniwosky from Silesia. He was the first in Poland to drive the Jews out of Pulaw. Some of those Jews came to Demblin, others to Vonvolitz, Baranov, Opolo. The deportation came about in December 1939 during an extremely bitter frost. On the way from Pulaw to Demblin, children froze to death.

Many of the Jewish youth from Demblin sneaked across the border to Russia.

4

The first act of the civilian authorities vis-à-vis the Jewish population was to extract a collective tax at the rate of 20,000 zlotys. It was quite clear that the sum was the same rate that Jews had had to pay for a loan from the Polish league for air defense from the state.

The winter was a hard one. Snow covered the roads and they rounded up Jews and made them clean the roads off. The Germans called the Jewish Council under the leadership of Leizor Teichman and demanded that he produce workers. Through the Jewish Council one received ration cards for food. A man named Geda, who was an assistant to the county administrator, Brondt, came to Demblin and acted out in a very ugly, vicious way and beat a lot of Jews up in a very brutal way. Teichman had the courage to go up to him and he made sure that the man received a lot of gifts and we never saw him again in Demblin.

A proclamation was issued that by March 10, 1940, the Jews would have to declare on a special form all of their possessions, for instance, houses and furniture and clothes. But the requested forms never appeared. After awhile, when the time limit expired, they dispossessed the householders [took title away from them], and then the Germans started to collect rent from them on their own houses. A uniformed German together with an ethnic German went to all the houses and took furniture, jewelry, garments, bedding and other things.

Even before this rip-off, the national commissar of the Demblin area, Lank, chief assistant to the county administrator, who had been appointed the commissar for Demblin and Ryki, the Jewish Council had to prepare an apartment for him. They had to make sure that there was running water and an in door toilet and other conveniences. At the request of the Jewish Council I made available to him a big living room, and Efraim Danovitch's son-in-law let him have a master bedroom.

Another proclamation came out that Jews dare not take part in the clothing business and were required to give all of their stock to the state. Bartel, from the county commandant office of Pulaw, carried out a search at Benjamin Aronek's and discovered some merchandise there. While this was going on word was sent to the Gendarmarie [police station] that a drunk was tearing up Aronek's place. So the police went over and they took Bartel into custody and they beat him up. Bartel told the county administrator Brondt, what had happened to him and that gentleman [Brondt] called together all of the presidents and secretaries of the Jewish Councils in the Pulaw province and told them about what had happened to Bartel in Demblin. He also accused them of bribing the police. And for that reason, Teichman and the secretary of the Jewish Council, Kannaryenfogel, with their families, were sent away to Vonvolnitz, a little town in the Pulaw province. There, there was a bailiff, an ethnic German, by the name of Miller. He had already made the Jews in the area take up quarters in animal dwellings. The Polish partisans killed, in that area, the German work inspector. And then, after that event, the police went around to all the dwellings, and whenever they encountered a man, they shot him. And that is how Kannaryenfogel died.

The national commissar, Lank, asked Blajetsky, who of the Jews did not want to pay for the Jewish Council. He [Blajetsky] gave him three names: Akiva Longleben, Hertzka Borkovitch and David Borenstein. And from this he

understood that who ever didn't want to pay what was required, could be taken. He, Lank, was a very needy person. He called the three individuals to his office, and ordered Borenstein to present him with a list of 12 Jews for the new Jewish Council. Among whom was my own self, without my knowledge. All 12 of us received an order to present ourselves to Lank in the office. He explained to us that we were the Jewish Council. He wasn't interested in any excuses or complaints. He ordered us to carry out his order. Myself and Orlovsky were made responsible for the Jewish Council.

The first decree which he handed out without the slightest justification upon the Jewish population was a tax of 10,000 zlotys and we produced the sum for him.

The second act of his was to create a ghetto. True, not one that was actually fenced off but Jews didn't dare leave it except to go to work. He pretended to be very concerned about the Jews. He called the Jewish Council together in order to make repairs on the apartments where the Jews lived. And this of course at a time when there was an absolute unavailability of any building materials. He ordered that groups of workers be organized, 50 workers, 25 crafts people and 25 unqualified people and that all of them, together with the Jewish Council, should show up in front of his office. Two workers didn't show up and so he beat us with his whip until blood ran. He ordered us to do gymnastics, knee bend exercises he called them, and afterwards he ordered that we carried people piggy back and the people who were in the riding positions were supposed to throw their counterparts off. Whoever actually fell off, got beaten up by his whip. On my shoulders, I carried Mones Sheinfeld.

When the repairs of the apartments began to be carried out, everyday, in the morning, I had to read out a list of repairs that had been accomplished. He also was concerned about the health of the Jews. He gave out an order that all of the Jews should bathe at a certain local bath house over 8 days. In the bath house there were 2 tubs and 4,000 Jews. This would mean of course, that every day, 500 Jews would have to go there and bathe and that was physically impossible. But, I made a report to him and I told him that 500 Jews had gone to the bath house and bathed.

He brought with him from Zavyertshe two young guys, Lipel and Kos, who were his servants. They were often guests at the Jewish Council office and they brought their orders with them that he had given. Zalman Orlovsky got him whatever he wanted and provided him with all the gifts that he could. The two boys were all right and we never had any problems with them. But afterwards someone ratted on Lank and what they had on him was the fact that he had two Jewish servants and so as a result of that the two boys were given permission to ride on the train and sent back to Zavyertshe.

Once I had a talk with him about a boy who had walked away from the ghetto. He said that it was not the job of the Jewish Council to intervene with German authority, but to carry out the orders of that authority. Still, he let the kid go.

We, the Jewish Council, and especially the secretary Ekheizer, had good relations with the local Polish council. Once Blazjetsky let us know that an inspector was coming, Miller, a fat German. He showed up in a combat uniform. He turned his back to us and that's the way I talked to him. I told him that the Jews were suffering great hunger, that they didn't even have any potatoes. He explained that the Jews were going to get potatoes. And it actually happened a little bit later on that we received them.

Once, a policeman came into the Jewish Council office with an accusation against... the Jewish Council to the county administrator. I was also written up. That the dentist's wife made gold teeth (and that was not permitted). And it also said that Rosenfeld and Orlovsky were Communists (this was just more trayf). The policeman remarked that if this accusation had actually been signed, he would have arrested us.

I looked for advice on a way out of the whole business. I had presented a request to the national commissar Lank that he should release me from serving on the Jewish Council. And I had obtained an excuse from the doctor that said that my wife was sick and I had to remain at home. Lank kept me hanging on for awhile. After that he became the administrator in Krajnik. The national commissar in Demblin became someone named Osternak, who had been the city commissar in Chelm. He promised to release me from my duties under two conditions, those were, two cotton blankets. He said that he did not want bedding from Jews other than cotton bedding because they were full with lice. He also wanted a complete kitchen set for 3 people as well as other things. He actually provided written permission for Leibel Brownshpigel to travel by train to Warsaw in order to obtain the blankets that he needed. I gave him a kitchen set of our own. He kept his word and he released me from my responsibilities at the Jewish Council.

The condition of the Jewish population became worse every day. Hunger, need and sickness spread enormously. The mortality rate grew continually. Typhus spread and from that disease, among others, the Jewish Council members, Nusker and Yosef Vanapol died. The latter was very active in public health efforts in the ghetto together with Doctor Kava, whose father had been a Dembliner. They carried out spraying in the ghetto against intestinal typhus. Dr. Kava also had

responsibility for the hospital which treated typhus victims where there were many Viennese Jews who had been assigned to work at the airfield.

After awhile the Germans transported 2,000 Jews from Vienna to Opole, in the Pulaw province, and a number of them began to work at a camp which was set up at the airfield. The camp commander was a Viennese Jew, Herman Venkart. The Doctor who came with them from Vienna also died from typhus.

A lot of Jews also died as a result of German bullets. Among others who were shot was Alter Apelker's son-in-law, who was a watch maker and the following members of the Jewish Council: Zalman Orlovsky who was Avram Feldfebert's son-in-law (he himself originated from Shedletz), he had been active in Zionist circles in Demblin and was a very able young man and a wonderful speaker. He had intervened with the police on behalf of Jews when it was still possible. He also, when they asked him to do something, would oblige them. Most of the time they asked that he get them shoes for their families, material for coats and other kinds of things like that which he was able to provide them. And he also was able to carry out the requests of Lank. He died in November of 1943, during the liquidation of the Poniatov camp.

The mail in the ghetto was carried out by Avromela Rozenfeld and he died tragically after the liberation. The accountant of the Jewish Council was Yitzhak Zjelechovsky. Moshe Kamin carried out the work of producing the list of workers. Both of them died in Germany. Pinchas Shteinbuch and Moshe Rubenstein worked with provisions for drawing up lists of people who would receive rations and taking care of provisions was the responsibility of Sheina Metnus. People received bread that was divided up and flour and sugar and potatoes and every once and awhile meat as well. The other members of the Jewish Council were David Borenstein, Wolf Shulman, Manes Seinfeld, Nascar and S. D. Urbach. After I parted company with the Jewish Council, Osternak appointed Velvel Shulman as president of the Jewish Council. After a month he also succeeded in getting out of his duties. After him, Drayfish became the president. He was somebody who had been deported from Konin, and somebody who the Germans had attached to the Reich. Dr. Kava was also deported from Konin. Drayfish was the president just for a few months, from September 1941 to April 1942.

7

The winter was very harsh. The Germans gave an order that the Jews must give up all their furs and pelts. And if they don't give them up, they're going to get killed as punishment. Some people complied and some other people simply burned them up. At night in the ghetto you could smell a very powerful odor of burning pelts.

Drayfish received a written order from the national commissar Osternak and he was demanding that he be given a list of the Jews who were not registered. The Germans had issued a proclamation that all Jews had to be registered in their dwellings and they weren't allowed to leave the places where they lived under the threat of death. Jews were escaping from the Warsaw ghetto because of the hunger and were trying to find a place to settle all over the place, in different communities, including Demblin. Drayfish provided the list to the national commissar, although he knew what the penalty was going to be. And all of them, 22 people, were shot, in the Ryki forest.

He [Drayfish] himself didn't have such a wonderful end. The county administrator Brondt, demanded a list of Jews who had written to him with various complaints and he [Drayfish] sent him such a list. Brondt had Drayfish sent, together with those people on the list, to the Kuzmeer punishment camp, and there they shot him, but all the other ones came back.

After Drayfish, the president of the Jewish Council was Yisrael Weinberg, a timber merchant. During his term of office all of the three deportations took place. The first one in the beginning of May. Before that the Polish police brought a few Jewish families from Bobrownik and they together with the Demblin Jews were sent the next morning to Sobibor.

At the sight of the deportation, the Germans brought a transport of Jews from Preschov, Czechoslovakia. At the second deportation there were many victims in the square in front of the destroyed synagogue. And this time the transport went to Treblinka. The young fellow named Tochtermann managed to hide out in a rail car packed with clothes and he came back from Treblinka to Demblin and gave us the sad greeting from there.

8

In the neighborhood of Demblin a number of German firms were operating. Among them was the firm "Hochtief", which dealt with the Jews who were employed there in a very brutal way. Once a Jew was brought to Demblin who had his head cracked open by a German boss with a shovel. He died after tremendous agony.

There were various camps in Demblin, at the airfield, at the railway station and other smaller ones operated by various companies in Stavy, where there was ammunition warehouses, and that was a camp where over 100 Jews from Ryki were working. All of these camps, except for the one at the airfield, were run by the Gestapo in Poniatov. Jews were also sent there after the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto. In November of 1943 everybody in Poniatov was shot.

Natan Vanapol and his family and brother Ahron, a couple of months before the liquidation, were sent to an airfield at Zamotch. There the Germans shot Ahron and Natan's son, Klimek, a child of 6 or 7 years.

During the liquidation of the camp at Poniatov, the Gestapo showed up in Demblin and we thought that we were going to suffer the same fate. But, we were saved for the time being because of the fact we were privileged folk because our work was provided by the German air force.

The first months in the camp were very hard. A large number of people lived off of little portions of food and suffered hunger. Typhus again demanded its victims. Among others who died were Gershon Abenshtein, the son of Chaim. Other young people who died as well from tuberculosis: Shlome Levin's daughter, young Noscar and others.

In the camp there were about 900 grown-ups and 60 kids. The camp was run by lower officers from the Luftwaffe, Kattinger, who was later to become the boss of the whole camp. After him the staff commander of the air field was Dosy. His assistant and the person who carried out his orders was a lower officer named Brown. The last person was Radenmacher.

The internal administration in the camp was in the hands of the Viennese Jews. The camp commander has already been said, Herman Venkart, his assistant, Grossman. The person responsible for the supplies was Polyak. The bath and the laundry was run by Walter. The work assignments were done by De-Mayo. And the police commander was Engel. The doctors in the camp were Dr. Rafael Kestenboim and Dr. Rozenblut. The dentistry help was provided by my wife.

A lot of work was carried out there. A large group of women worked in gardens and agriculture and they picked potatoes and had to take them down into the cellars where they rotted. On the streets, snow was swept. Young people worked repairing the runways in the airfield. They worked at the train hook-up and the coal dump and where the clothes were produced, etc. At 5 o'clock in the morning they woke us up and at 9 o'clock at night they put us to bed. There was in the camp a very cramped bridge of barbed wire in which somebody who was being punished was placed in there and wasn't able to move around at all. A second form of punishment was getting beaten on the bottom. Upon an order from the commandant of the airfield, the Germans carried out 2 death sentences. One, a Jew, was hung for theft, and a second one was shot for having money on his person. A group of 10 men were shot as a result of a fire which started in their work place. The S.S. man Peterson tortured to death Shmuel Shteinbuch and Yoneh Hochman because a German accused them of having asked him for revolvers.

Two groups of Slovakian Jews managed to sneak out of the camp in order to make their way back to Slovakia, but they were killed along the way. A group of young people armed themselves and got out of the camp but they fell in battle with the Polish partisans.

In the dark days of our pain and suffering, it should be said that there were to be found, true, not very often, rays of light. Among these I must count in the first rank the radio reports from the BBC which were broadcast from the Polish regime in London and which we were able to hear in the radio repair workshop which was run by Chaim Fishfeld. We also received comfort from a few German soldiers. In 1943, a German soldier called me over and told me that the German offensive had failed and was turning around the other way. A second told me that in Warsaw there was an exchange where German soldiers were selling weapons and ammunition. There are other incidents like that, a few of them, about which I heard from other Jews.

In the summer of 1944, as a result of the approaching eastern front, the camp had to be liquidated and people who were in the camp were to be transported to Czenstechov. The original plan was for 5 transports of 200 people each. The first transport of 200 people was sent according to the plan, but the rest of the people had to be sent all at once because the front was getting close and fast.

9

The 22nd of July, 1944, on a day when the Russians took Lublin, they loaded us up on rail cars and took us to Czenstechov to the factory called Warta. The majority of the people who were sent remained there in that factory to work and the rest of them went to an iron house called Rakov and Czenstechov-Yanko. The children in Warta were taken away from their parents and the Germans threatened that they would suffer the same fate as the children who had come with the first 200 people. We turned to the people who were already there to save the children. The first act was when my wife was able to go and be with the children. She was with them the whole day and made sure that they had something to eat. Dr. Trayvish, the camp chief Yoles, and others, through the German bosses, were able to work on the camp commander Barteshlagger so that he would grant the children their lives. After three days of effort the children came back to their parents.

One of the children was not fated to live to liberation. That was the son of Mrs. Gilibter (son of Chaim Nodelfodem). Unfortunately, he was drenched with a bucket of boiling water over his whole body and died in the clinic. In the infirmary, Dr. Trayfish saved the life of Berel Sherman's wife. She came with horrible stomach pains and her stomach had collapsed. Dr. Trayvish ordered that an operation had to take place immediately and they brought instruments from the

camp clinic where there were 6,000 Jews. (The instruments they were using actually came from a Jewish hospital which had been located in Czenstechov.)

The conditions in both camps were very, very harsh, fleas, lice, and bed bugs ate people alive. The mortality rate was extremely high. In Warta we tried to carry out an operation to provide more nourishment. We gathered money as much as possible. We bought bread and divided it among those who really needed it. Money came from the committee to help the Jews in the camps.

In the camp "Warta" we were 3,000 people. The first contingent of 500 people had been brought from Plaschov, near Craw. Afterwards people came from Lodz and after them we people from Demblin and from the camp at Skorzesko-Kamina.

A day before the liberation at Czenstechov, by the Soviets, the villains marched out 1,500 people to Germany. Bartenshlagger before his escape ordered that we should all go to Germany, but nobody moved from the spot.

After the liberation, I and my family settled in Lublin.

I WILL NEVER FORGET THAT DAY

BY ZIPPORAH SCHILLING / ISRAEL

The 17th of Heshvan [October 28th] was a beautiful one. The sun was shining, but for us, those few hundred Jews who remained in the Demblin ghetto, it was a day of darkness and great sorrow and tragedy. Very early we noticed a very large and powerful movement of police and German soldiers, a sign that something big was going to be happening against the Jews.

It didn't take long before the brutes came into the ghetto. Savagely and viciously they began to drive together men, women and children to the market place where there were trucks already waiting. The unfortunate Jews who didn't go fast enough to the gathering point or didn't have enough strength, were driven with blows or just shot on the spot.

An order was given and we had to leave the town. From the market place to the train station, the murderers of the Zonder-Dientz accompanied us with their insignia, a cross bones and skull. When the first wagons approached the rails, a train came from Lublin and it stopped. Among the Jews who were gathered, there was a big commotion and a riot and before the guards figured out what was going on, people started to run away into the fields not far from the Koshteshelna street. I ran too, until I fell and hid myself among heads of cabbage. I stayed there as long as I had to until I was sure that the transport of Jews had departed.

But where was I supposed to go then? In the ghetto which had been emptied? Hide myself with Christians who were ready to turn you in to the Germans for a kilo of sugar? Nevertheless, the drive to live was very strong and I decided to make my way to Zjitzjin in the Gutbojitz, where there were several Jewish families and where there was as well my sister, Naomi Poteshman. I traversed the 16 kilometers with the greatest caution and fear of death along the train tracks. When I finally arrived there, the Jews looked at me astonished. How was it possible to escape from the hands of those villains?

It was very hard for me to say even one word about what had happened. My single worry was whether I'd be able to stay there and have some place to lay my head down and eat. But it was not I that actually made this decision. I didn't get that opportunity to stay there. The man in control there was a liberal person and he pretended to not see the fact that I had arrived.

But it didn't take long because as a result of frequent searches and patrols of the Germans they would have shot me without the permit of the work office and the other Jews would have suffered as well. Then my luck played out in this way: among the Jewish women there was Lotka Abenshtein, who from an earlier period

had prepared Aryan documents. Thanks to these papers, I seized being Tesha Schilling and received another name.

But this good fortune did not last for long. An order came down that all of the Jews of Zjitzjin had to go to the police station in Demblin. It's impossible to express our thoughts at that time. We finally arrived there. We were happy again, though, because they sent us to a work camp at the train station. But the very hard work conditions and the experiences of the last years sapped the little bit of strength and courage remaining that we still had. Add to that there were rumors that had started to circulate that the Germans planned to liquidate the camp.

This was the heavy weight on my thoughts and I began to try to figure out how I could get to the work camp at the airfield where my sisters Miriam Tzimbrovitch and Rivka Luxemburg were. After a lot of effort and with the help of money, I succeeded in my goal and I started a new life, if you can call that a life, in the hell of the forced labor of German camps.

And in this way the days went by, the weeks, and the years, until the 22nd of July, 1944 when an order came down to evacuate our camp because the Russian army had approached the Vistula.

They transported us on specially prepared rail cars to Czenstechov. Before arriving in the station, when the area wasn't as closely guarded, myself and my good friend, Gutka Pankevitch took advantage of the moment and we ran away. Our goal was to make it back to Demblin on foot.

After making it for a few kilometers, we sat down to rest among some trees. Suddenly, from no where, a man appeared, dressed as a civilian and he asked us what we were doing and what we needed. We asked him to bring us some food. He promised to come back soon and he kept his word. He came back, as a matter of fact, with two armed Germans who took us back for an interrogation to the Czenstechover Gestapo where they beat us up and tortured us. They were very suspicious that we were aligned with the Partisans. After that they put us in jail where there were quite a few other people who had been arrested, who waited for the death sentence to be carried out. After staying there for four days, on death row, they drove us out of there onto a rail car and sent us to Auschwitz.

The life in Auschwitz until the end of December, 1944 and afterwards in the Weis-Waser Camp in Sudetanland until the end of the War, May 1945, is a story in itself. I just want to remark that in Auschwitz I went through five selections which were carried out by the notorious villain, Mengele, and I wasn't sent to the gas chamber.

I was liberated in Sudetanland. Basically what happened was that I fled from the camp with about half of the French and English prisoners of war. Another period of wandering began and my goal was to travel back to Demblin with the faint hope that perhaps somebody close to me had survived. On the first of June, 1945, to my great joy, I found in Demblin, my sister Rivka Luxemburg who survived with her daughter and from them I learned that my oldest sister, Miriam Tzimbrovitch, with her husband and children, were in Czenstechov. The next day our brother Shmuel Schilling arrived in town. He had been an officer in the Polish army and a whole number of other survivors began to show up. But remaining in Demblin and trying to re-establish a Jewish life there was something that nobody really thought about seriously. The small number of Jews began to leave their town which once again remained without Jews as on the 28th of October, 1942.

The path away from Demblin led to Israel, America, Canada. But many were forced to pass through cursed German soil. There were established different groups, parties, societies, institutes. There were a lot of Landsmen and organizations from different vicinities. The first people to try to gather all those from Demblin in Germany were Tzaduk and Miriam Tzimbrovitch. The 17th of Cheshvan was declared as the memorial date for Jews who had fallen in Demblin. And that date has been observed everywhere. Also in America, Miriam Tzimbrovitch continued her concern and tried to make sure that this memorial date was observed each year.

THE YEAR 1942

BY YISRAEL BUBIS

The year was 1942. It seemed it wouldn't be long before Hitler ruled all of Europe. Under the brute, France and Belgium were already occupied as well as Holland and Yugoslavia, Romania and Poland, Norway and Denmark. The War with Russia was in full swing, the Germans found themselves at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad. And in Poland the machinery of extermination was working full tilt which brought everyday thousands of Jews to their deaths. In Demblin too they were already taking people out on transports to Sobibor.

In that terrible year I was 15 years old and I worked in the ghetto as a mailman. In the cordoned off and tortured Jewish quarter in Demblin there were about 2,500 souls remaining, but the majority of them were not from Demblin. There were Jews who had been selected from Ryki, from Preschov (Slovakia) and from Vienna. While part of them were in the ghetto, the bigger part was employed in various camps outside of the town, for instance in the train station, at the fortress and at the airfield. The last ones at the airfield were put up there on the spot, they weren't allowed to leave the work place, while at the fortress people left every night and went home to go to sleep in the ghetto. (My father was also among those people in the fortress, a grandson of the Rabbi of Korev who got married in Demblin to the daughter of Abala Bronshpeigl and her name was Chana. Before the War my father worked in a boat that went up and down the Vistula river. I also had a sister Hadassa, a brother Yankl, who lived in Warsaw and a brother Yichael, who died in 1935. In 1939 my brother and sister escaped to Russia but with the outbreak of the German-Soviet War they remained in Bialystok and there were killed by the German villains. My mother died in 1941 in Demblin, and in 1942 just myself and my father remained.)

At the end of September 1942 the German soldiers from the Luftwaffe surrounded the ghetto and the gendarmes and Ukrainians began to drive together into one place the Jews of the ghetto. Whoever tried to hide and was discovered or whoever tried to get away was shot on the spot. Still I succeeded to get out of the ghetto and immediately began to run to my father at the fortress. Here terror held sway and desperation and uncertainty about the fate of the families who remained in the ghetto. We heard shooting late into the night and after work the people were afraid to go back to the ghetto. So people actually slept there in the fortress under the open sky because there weren't any barracks there. But I was sure that night nobody closed an eye.

In the morning I decided to return to the ghetto. It was apparent that everybody except the workers in the camps and in the fortress, that all the rest of the Jews, had been taken away from Demblin.

The little streets of the ghetto looked like a pogrom had hit with all the attendant slaughter. There were more than 250 people who had been shot who were lying around who hadn't been picked up yet. Fifty Jews who had hidden out, came out of their bunker, cellars and attics and didn't want to believe their own eyes although the tragedy was unmistakable. I felt strongly that I couldn't stay in the ghetto and I returned to the fortress. But on the way I went by the camp at the site of the airfield and I heard talk that Demblin was going to become Judenrein. What the fate of those in the fortress was going to be was unknown because they weren't people who were actually living there. Through the barbed wire I spoke with Joseph Ekheiser who during the night had been able to slip into the camp with his family. Joseph told me that I should stay there at the camp and since his brother was with me, (his brother's name was Yaakov Ekheiser) we both came into the camp.

For 200 zlotys they were able to obtain for me a document from the ethnic German Vishnevsky, which legalized my remaining at the airport. They also succeeded in beginning to start to get a document for my father.

That day, when the Jews in the fortress finished their work, they were ordered to clear out of the place. They weren't allowed to stay there and spend the night. And so a lot of them headed for our camp at the airport which was surrounded by fences. There were barracks there where people could live. This camp was run by the Viennese Jew, Herman Venkart and the Jewish camp police. Not far from the camp lived the German supervisor with overall authority over the place, Kattinger, an under officer in the Luftwaffe. Across from his barracks was the bath house of the camp which was run by the Viennese Jew, Walter Appel.

That evening, when about 300 Jews from the fortress wanted to get into the camp at the airport, Venkart and his police fanned out at the gate in order to make sure that nobody could get in. It's interesting that the whole night Kattinger did not show up at all. Thanks to that, some of the Jewish police did allow people to sneak into the camp if Venkart wasn't looking. Walter Appel also allowed some Jews to hide themselves in the bath house, although the bath was actually outside the confines of the camp itself. Thanks to Moshe Goldberg, my father got into my camp. There were about 100-150 Jews who were able to get into Venkart's camp. If Venkart did not during the course of the subsequent day discover people who were hiding out illegally, it was possible to get their legality straightened out through Vishnevsky. Of course you had to pay for it. But you had to wait a day after he was paid for the paper to come through. Among those who had to wait for this document was my father. They promised him that they would bring the document right at the beginning of the afternoon. He decided that in the meantime he should hide out at the bath. But while leaving the camp in order to go to the bath, Venkart saw him and began to scream at him. Although my father explained that because he didn't have a document he wasn't going to remain in the camp for the time being so that he wouldn't put anybody else in danger and

was just going to hide out for a little while in another place. But Venkart didn't stop screaming and the gendarmes came over and then my father really got terrified of staying around there. He didn't want to go to hide out in the bath and instead he walked over to the group of Jews who did not yet have their documents and hadn't been able to get into the camp. They decided collectively to return to the fortress. My father said he just was not going to stick around while Venkart was there, it was too dangerous...

From the fortress he sent me word that I should come to him there at the fortress so that we could be together. Of course I wanted him to come to me and be with me at the airfield because I thought we had it all planned out and that I was going to be able to get the right papers for him. But he never really had a chance to take advantage of that document. The Nazis took all the Jews from the fortress and sent them to Treblinka...

**"CIRCLING" IN MEMORY OF THE MARTYRS
IN THE RABBI OF MODZJITZ HOUSE OF LEARNING IN TEL AVIV**

BY ARYE ALBERT

In the House of Learning of the Rabbi of Modzjitz, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu Taub, on Dizengof Street in Tel Aviv, much happiness took place during the second circling [In Sukkot, one of the ritual seven circlings of the Torah], that was attended by thousands of people, who came from far away and from nearby and filled the synagogue and the yard, and blocked the entire street's traffic.

The circling, which lasted two hours, brought Torah happiness, Hasidic joy and uplifted the soul.

The yeshiva boys, dressed in their traditional Hasidic garb, and a large *haredi* crowd, were swept into the celebration, which intensified by the moment and swept everyone nearby. They were not tired.

The ritual circling was headed by the Admor of Modzjitz, may he enjoy good, long life, who served also as the "master of ceremonies" and the "conductor". It brought honor to the Torah and Hasidim. No doubt, the crowd from all walks of life, who came to feel the joy of the Torah, was instilled with strong holy spirit, which will not be lost. The holy joy filled their hearts with the pure flame of Jewish sources.

Very impressive was the "*Ozzer Dallim*" [helpers of the poor] circling, in memory of the martyrs, may God avenge their deaths.

The lights were turned off. The Torah scrolls were put on the stage at the center of the House of Learning. The Rabbi and the crowd circled the stage singing and dancing, as joy and agony mixed. Sad nigguns, of pleading and love, accompanied the verses, "Helper of the poor, please help," "Act not for us but for you," "The Temple shall be built," and "Please come, Redemption."

When the singing of "I believe in the coming of the Messiah" was sung, you could imagine the last hours of the martyrs, who sanctified the name of God in their myriads, believing that Israel shall prevail and the days of splendor will come to the People of Israel.

When the lights were turned on and the dancers again expressed their joy, the people's eyes were filled with tears.

I saw among the dancers many Holocaust survivors, remnants of the fire, who had gone through the seven wards of hell and their faith was forged in blood and fire. Their faces expressed the storm in their hearts.

Hard experiences that cannot be forgotten.

From *She'arim* Daily [Orthodox], Tishrei 24, 1964, Tel Aviv



ילדי דמבלין במחנה-עבודה בצ'נסטוכוב.
חלק מהם ניצלו, אחרים — נישפו.

Children from Demblin at the Czenstechov Labor Camp
A Part Of Their Light, After Their -- Escape

(PAGE 302 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-C47



The Final Road

(PAGE 309 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-C48



In The Day Of The German Occupation
 (PAGE 328 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-C49



One of the Victims of the German Murderers in Demblin
 (PAGE 352 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-C50



אין דעמבלינער געטא

בגיסו דמבלין

In The Demblin Ghetto
(PAGE 410 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-C51



די באפרייונג פון טשענסטאכאווער לאגער

השחרור מן המחנה בצ'נסטחוב

The Liberation of Czenstechov Camp
(PAGE 471 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)
PHOTO-C52



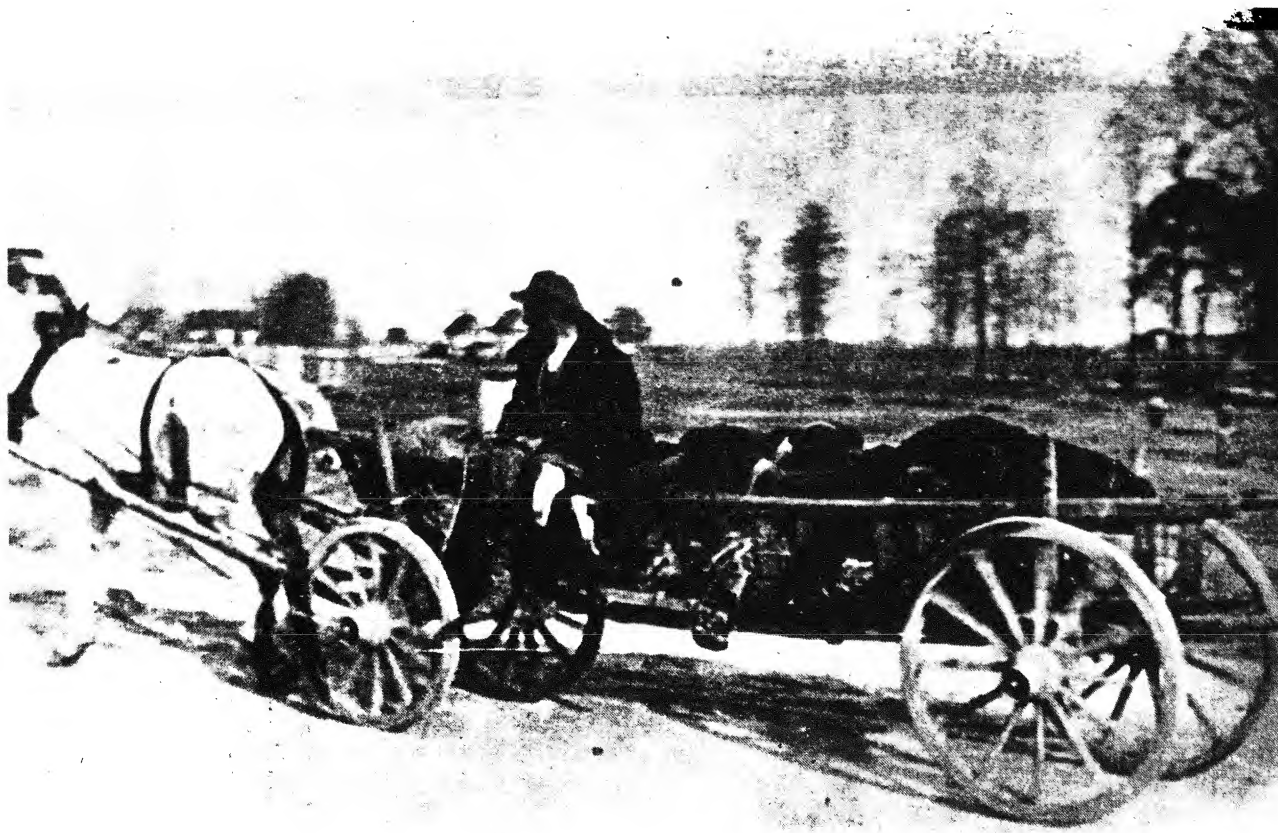
המלמד ר' ברוך גולדערט
— בגיטו.

דער דרדקי-מלמד
ר' ברוך זיידאלע גאלדראט
— אין געטא.

The Teacher Reb Baruch Golderet -- In The Ghetto

(PAGE 479 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-C53



חללי השואה מובאים לבית הקברות בבוברובניק • קרבנות פון דייטשע רציחות אויפן וועג צום בית הקברות אין באבראווניק

Victims of the German Brutes on the Way to the Cemetery in Bobrownik
(PAGE 528 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-C54



Esther-Sarala, zal (*first from the left*)
(PAGE 530 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-C55

D.
THOSE FROM DEMBLIN-MODZJITZ
IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD

ACCOUNT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
DEMBLIN-MODZJITZ EMIGRE ORGANIZATION IN ISRAEL

BY ARYE BUCKSPAN / TEL AVIV

The official activity of our Landzmenschaft [the group activity of the people from the home town] dates from the year 1939, when we gathered together in the dwelling (barracks) of our fellow townsmen, David Rozenfeld, who is no longer with us. Then a little directorship was chosen in the following way: David Rozenfeld (Chairman), Mordechai Rozenwein (Secretary), Simcha Berent (Treasurer), Benyomin Zilberman, Yaacov Rozenberg and the author of these lines.

אכטונג יידן פון דעם בליז
אז אומגעגאנג!

אין צוואנציגסטן יאָר. מיט דער זעקסטער
יאָרצייט פון דער ליקווידאַציע פון
דעמבלינער יידנטום אָרדנען מיר אַין

א זכר

זונס'ק. דעם 21 נאָוועמבער 1948
3 אַייגער נאָכמיטאָג

אין גייזעלערינג.

אלע דעמבלינער לאַנדסלייט אין פּוּ
דער אומגעגאנג ווערן געבעטן מאַכען
ווייז זיך צו באַטייליקן אין דער דאָכער

דער ארגאניזיר-קאמיטעט 835

הודעה על אזכרה לקדושי דמבלין בגייזלהרינג
(גרמניה) ב' 21 לנובמבר 1948, בדרך לישראל

NOTICE FOR A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE MARTYRS OF DEMBLIN IN
GEISELHERING (GERMANY) ON THE WAY TO ISRAEL, NOVEMBER 21, 1948

[TRANSLATION OF NOTICE]: *Attention Jews in Demblin and vicinity! In connection with the sixth anniversary of the liquidation of Demblin Jewry, we are preparing a memorial prayer (service) Sunday, November 21, 1948, 3 p.m., in Geiselhering.*

All people from Demblin and vicinity are invited to come and take part in the service. The Organizing Committee

[See PHOTO-D56 through PHOTO-D61 at the end of Section D]

Five years later in 1944, during work on Tel Aviv port, our Chairman had a bad accident, he had a blow to his head, and as a result of a terrible headache the doctors decided to operate on him. During the operation, David died. This was a terrible loss for our group.

In that epic our treasury was completely empty. The directors, Yaacov Rozenberg and myself, turned to the then secretary of Tel Aviv Workers Council, Mordechai Namir (afterwards he became the Mayor of Tel Aviv), with a request to help us financially to carry out the funeral of David Rozenfeld. Mr. Namir was able to get a special bus rented for us and he took care of the funeral, he did it in a very respectful way. The Secretary of the carpenter's union and myself were the ones who eulogized the person who had passed away. In our talks we underlined and emphasized his energy, his activity and his sacrifices which David made for Demblin and for those who were from Demblin. David was a conscientious worker, he belonged to the Labor Zionist organization and was active in the Histadrut.

Our Treasurer, Simcha Berent (he was our Treasurer, although it was really his wife Rachel who came from Demblin) did a lot for our fellow towns people. In his barrack, in the *Shechonot Harochebet* [train settlement], in Tel Aviv, we used to hold our meetings, our celebrations, our gatherings. Simcha was one of the most active and everybody would receive his help if he was able.

* * *

The first tragic news from our town came in 1944, when some Demblin towns people came to Palestine with the Polish army from General Anders. We helped them as best we could to get them settled in the land. We tried to take care of finding them some work and a place to sleep and to guard them from the evil eye of the British police.

After receiving letters from the Demblin survivors of the Holocaust in Poland and in Germany as well as a list of those who had survived Hitler's hell, we began to gather together money and clothes for the people in need. In the Jewish newspapers in America we made a public appeal to our towns' people to help the suffering sisters and brothers in Europe and make it possible for them to come to Israel. Unfortunately there wasn't much of a response to this appeal.

In that epic the Secretary Mordechai Rozenwein was especially active. He did everything in order to gather together money and clothes. Those who came to Israel, we tried to cheer up and to help with good work and practical help as well. The new arrivals told us about the destruction, the brutality, the crimes and the suffering the Jews underwent in Demblin-Modzjitz, in the years 1939 to 1945. The

great deportation came in the month of May 1942. This very day we have marked as the one in which we carry out our yearly remembrance for our murdered Jews. Later, from year to year, the number of people who attended our commemorations got smaller and smaller.

In 1962 in Jerusalem we had a memorial stone for the martyrs of Demblin made. On the 10th of July we unveiled it.

In 1963 at the yearly commemoration gathering, we decided on a committee: Chaim-Meir Goldberg, Yaacov Ekheiser, Moshe Wasserman, Hershel Eichenbrenner; together with the previous committee members: Benyomin Zilberman, Andje Shmeltzstein and Arye Buckspan. These people dedicated themselves with renewed energy to the holy task of bringing out this Yizkor book. We sent out appeals and letters to Dembliners in the world as well as in Israel. We also made contacts with the city officials in Demblin, from which we were able to receive very important material.

In 1964 one of our Landzman visited Israel, the author Benyomin Taitelboim, who's pen name is B. Demblin. He came to visit with his wife. For them we had a great welcome party and there was a special literary evening and he was able to sell his books.

In 1966 in the house of Andje Tishman-Shmeltzstein, there was a reception for a number of honored Landzleit guests, people from Demblin who lived in other countries, Miriam Tzimbrovitch, Rivka Shilling, Esther Potik - from America, and Weinwurtzel from Paris. The guests promised to help and showed great interest in the activity of the Dembliners in Israel.

But our main task and sacred goal was to bring out a book of memories, a Yizkor book, which would serve forever, for the generations to come, as a monument to Jewish Demblin and her dynamic development and tragic end. With the commitment of the editor, our friend David Stokfish, to the sacred task, the preparations were intense as was the planning. After several years of gathering together and editing, we were finally able to realize our plan.

In the introduction of the book, we tell a little bit about the difficulty and the struggles and the effort involved in bringing out this book. With the publishing of this Book of Memory, we consider that our task of Lanzmenshaft, of being members of this community of Demblin, has not ended. There is still a broad field of work for the Demblin-Modzjitzer folks in Israel and beyond.

THE DEMBLIN SOCIETY IN FRANCE

BY WOLF TENENBOIM / PARIS

After the First World War, many Demblin Jews made their way to France looking for employment, for bread, for a roof over their heads in the new land, and also a different political climate than that which had been holding sway in Poland. The majority of the new immigrants settled into traditional crafts or occupations, like being a tailor, making hand bags and working on these long laced boots (gaiters). Others went to southern France and worked even in factories at manual labor.

In the 30's the stream of immigrants to overseas, out of Poland, became much stronger. The Jewish youth in Poland, also in our Demblin, felt that they were constricted, that their whole situation was hemmed in economically, politically and that Polish Nationalism worked against them. Coming to Paris after the first weeks of looking around and getting themselves settled, a portion of our people from back home followed the kinds of activities that were engaged in the occupations in the old home, they began in Paris to keep up the kinds of things they did at home.

In 1937, in the capital of France, the first reunion of people from Demblin took place. At that time the subject was helping the Jews of Demblin who that year, 1937, had suffered a terrible fire. If my memory doesn't fail me there were about 80 people who came to that gathering.

After the great destruction of European Jewry, during which a lot of the Jews from Demblin who had been living in Paris, were deported, the size of our group was reduced substantially. But one thing was clear to us; that after such a big tragedy, it was necessary to renew the activity of our Landzmenschaft, (which in our language is called a Society), in order to bring help to the needy here and in other countries, and of course especially in Israel. In 1960, we officially founded the Society. We consist of 25 Jewish families from Demblin. Each year we have a memorial to the memory of our lost ones, our martyrs, the victims of Nazi barbarity. We take part in many of the normal Jewish activities in France.

We also get together to celebrate and to honor Landzmen of ours and the events that happen in their families, like Bar-Mitzvahs and Weddings and other occasions. The committee of our Society consists of 7 members. A special commission worked on the Yizkor book, gathering material and money for the sacred task.

For our description of the activity of the Demblin society in France I submit an invitation which was sent out in the year 1960 when we had our first memorial evening:

To the people from Demblin and surrounding communities!

Dear Friend,

You are invited with your families to come to the memorial evening which we're going to have on Wednesday, the 11th of May, 9 in the evening, in the hall of the monument of Jewish Martyrs, to commemorate our murdered parents, sisters, brothers and children, who were so terribly tormented in the death camps of the Hitler murderer.

The evening will have a special character because this is the first time that the Jews from Demblin in France have organized a separate memorial evening, and at the same time because it falls on the 19th anniversary of the first deportation in Demblin camp.

Some friends, who miraculously survived the Demblin camp, will tell us about the torments that those close to us had to suffer before their deaths.

It's therefore a duty for all Dembliners and for those who come from around there, so that together we can honor our martyrs.

Honored be their memory!

In the last years we have had memorial evenings in the month of October on the anniversary of the liquidation of the Demblin ghetto.

[See PHOTO-D62 and PHOTO-D63 at the end of Section D]



A Part Of The Audience At The Annual Memorial Service In Tel Aviv
(PAGE 586 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-D56



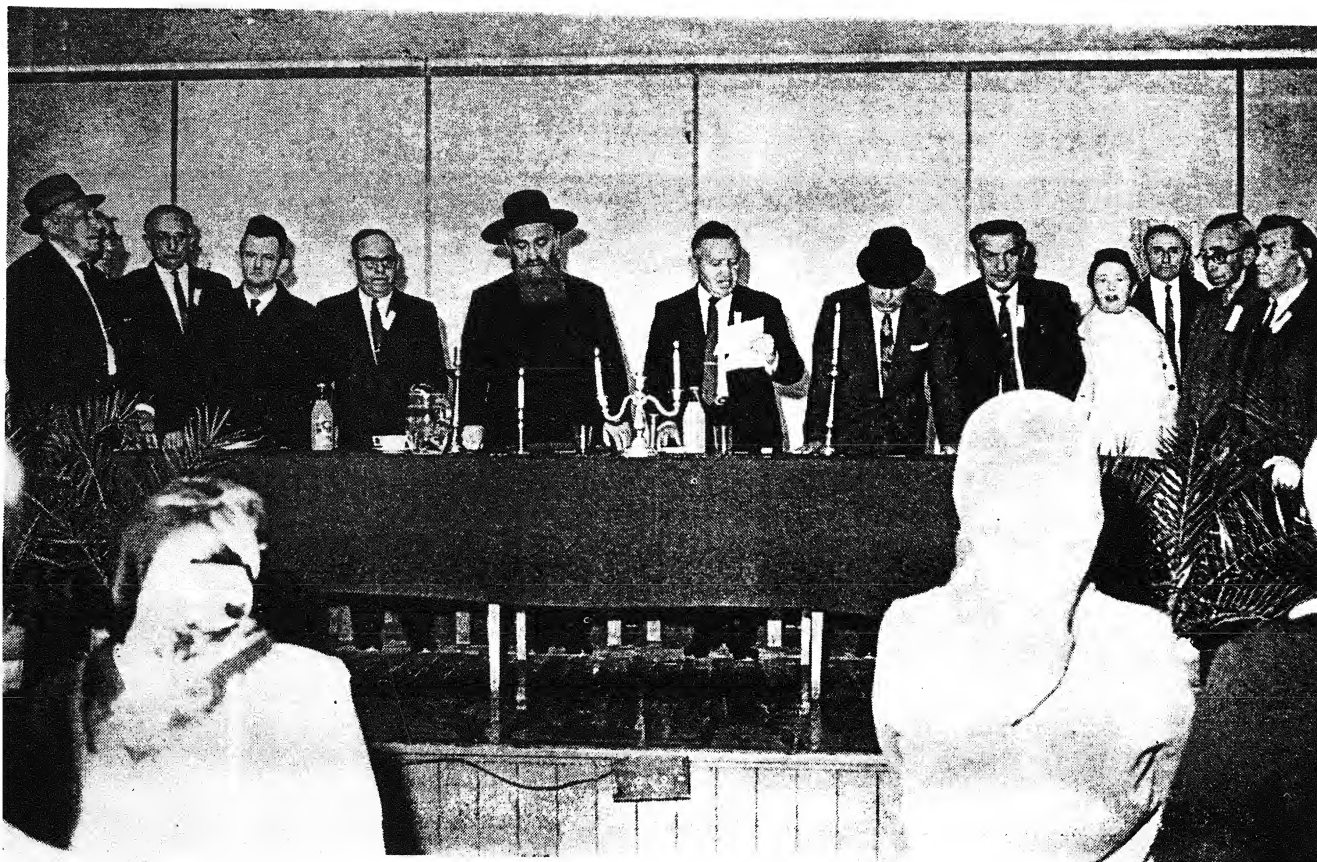
The Landsmanshaft Committee in Israel

(Sitting from right to left): Mordechai Rozenwein, Moshe Wasserman, Andje Shmeltzstein, Yaacov Rozenberg, Leib Buckspan

(Standing from right to left): Yaacov Ekheizer, Chaim Goldberg, Hadassa Eichenbrenner, Hershel Eichenbrenner, Benyamin Zilberman

(PAGE 587 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-D57



נשיאות האזכרה השנתית, בהשתתפות הרב ידידיה פרנקל
פרעזידיום פון דער יערלעכער אזכרה מיטן אַנטייל פון הרב ידידיה פרענקעל

Chairmanship of the Annual Memorial with the Participation of Reb Yidideh Frenkel

(PAGE 588 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-D58



הנשיאות באזכרה לקדושי דמבלין בתל-אביב (1967)
פרעזידיום פון דער אזכרה פאר די דעמבלינער קדושים אין תל-אביב (1967)

Chairmanship of the Memorial Service for the Martyrs of Demblin in Tel Aviv
(1967)

(PAGE 589 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-D59



קבלת-פנים לאורחים מחו"ל — תל-אביב, 1966
אויפנאָמע פאר געסט פון אויסלאַנד — תל-אביב, 1966

Reception for Guests from Overseas -- Tel Aviv, 1966

(PAGE 591 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-D60



ועד הארגון בניו יורק (יושבים מימין לשמאל): אברהם אבנשטיין, וולוו טישמן, אלטר שטיינבוך, חפצה סרני, שאול וויינברג
 עומדים (מימין לשמאל): יחיאל זמנר, ברל שרמן, מר פדרבוש, מוטל רוזנברג, דוד וייכמן, מר גפן
 קאמיטעט פון דער סאָסייטי אין ניו-יאָרק: (עס זיצן פון רעכטס אויף לינקס): אברהם אבנשטיין, וועלוו טישמאן, אלטר שטיינבוך,
 חפצה סארני (,,די געלע חפצה"), שאול וויינבערג
 (עס שטייען פון רעכטס אויף לינקס): יחיאל זעמנער, בערל שערמאן, ה' פערדערוש, מאַטל ראָזענבערג, דוד ווייכמאן, ה' גפן

New York Dembliners

(Sitting from right to left): Avram Abenshtein, Velvel Tishman, Alter Shteinbuch, Chafetza Sareni, Saul Weinberg

(Standing from right to left): Yichiel Zamner, Berel Sherman, Mr. Federbush, Motel Rozenberg, David Waichman, Mr. Gafen

(PAGE 594 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-D61



ועד האירגון בפריס (יושבים מימין לשמאל): סימון פייבילביץ', ווליה טננבוים, הרשיל ניסנבוים, אברהם גולדברג
 עומדים: שלמה בנטמן, אבא בנטמן, יאנקל פֿיכטענבוים
 אָמיטעט פון דער סאַסייטי אין פאַריז (עס זיצן פון רעכטס אויף לינקס): סימאָן פֿיווילעוויטש, וואָלע טענענבוים, הערשל ניסענבוים, אברהם גאָלדבער
 עס שטייען: שלמה באַנטמאַן, אבא באַנטמאַן, יאָנקל פֿיכטענבוים

Committee for the Society in Paris

(Sitting from right to left): Simon Faivelvitch, Volye Tenenboim, Hershel Nisenboim, Avram Goldberg

(Standing): Shloma Bantman, Aba Bantman, Yankel Feichtenboim

(PAGE 596 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-D62



ועד הספר בפאריס (מימין לשמאל): הרשל ניסענבוים, גדליהו פוטרפלאם, וועלוול שולמן, לייבל נודלכודים, יעקב פֿיכטענבוים
 בוך־קאָמיטעט אין פאַריז (פון רעכטס אויף לינקס): הערשל ניסענבוים, גדליהו פוטרפלאם, וועלוול שולמאַן, לייבל נאָדלפאָדעם, יעקב פֿיכטענבוים

Book Committee in Paris

(From right to left): Hershel Nisenboim, Gadlihu Puterflam, Velvel Shulman, Laibel Nodelfodem, Yaacov Feichtenboim

(PAGE 598 OF YIDDISH-HEBREW BOOK)

PHOTO-D63

Mount Zion - Jerusalem
Memorial Monument
For the martyrs of our town

Demblin-Modzjitz

(near Lublin, Poland)

Parents Brothers and Sisters, May God Avenge Their Death
Who were murdered and destroyed in the years 5699-5705 (1939-1945)
Their holy memory shall never leave us
May Their Souls Be Included With The Living
Memorial Day is Cheshvan 17
Organization of Demblin-Modzjitz Townspeople in Israel and the
Diaspora

E.
PAGES THAT IMMORTALIZE

**We mourn them all, together with the
holy of Israel, who perished as martyrs
at the hands of German murderers and
their accomplices in the years of the
Second World War and afterward.**

A [ALEPH]

Auntoiglich, Isaac	Avramowitz, Chana-Tzirel
Auntoiglich, Esther (Etel)	Avramowitz, Rivka
Auntoiglich, Frieda	Avramowitz, Sarah
Auntoiglich, Sheva	Avramowitz, Avraham
Auntoiglich, Basha	Avramowitz, Gitel
Auntoiglich, Samson	Avramowitz, Chaim
Auntoiglich, Yoneh and family	Avramowitz, Rachel
Opes, Tzevya and family	Avramowitz, Yosef
Adlerman, Yisrael	Avramowitz, Pesa
Adlerman, Malka	Avramowitz, Gitel
Adlerman, Leyuba	Avramowitz, Roda
Adlerman, Sarah	Avramowitz, Baila
Adlerman, Tova	Avramowitz, Chaya
Aichenbrenner, Ahron	Avramowitz, Leah
Aichenbrenner, Rochma	Avramowitz, Avraham
Aichenbrenner, Rafael	Avramowitz, Riva
Aichenbrenner, Rivka	Aiglitzky, Moshe, his wife and three children
Aichenbrenner, Yidel	Aiglitzky, Avraham and wife
Aichenbrenner, Tzaporah	Ainshindler, Moshe
Aichenbrenner, Simcha-Godel	Ainshindler, Hilda
Aichenbrenner, Sonya and child	Ainshindler, Chaim
Aichenbrenner, Bella	Ainshindler, Simcha
Aichenbrenner, Moshe-Laib	Ainshindler, Shloma
Aichenbrenner, Zlota and son Yechzikiel	Ainshindler, Shloma
Aichenbrenner, Leah-Tema and daughter Sarah	Ainshindler, Nesha
Albstein, Yaacov-Shloma	Ainshindler, Perel
Albstein, Faiga-Raizel	Abenstein, Yidel
Albstein, Perel	Abenstein, Yaacov
Albstein, Chana	Abenstein, Tzevya
Albstein, Hershel	Abenstein, Avraham-Yosel
Albstein, Eleizor	Abenstein, Tova
Albstein, Shmuen	Abenstein, Moshe
Alenblum, Ahron-Hersh	Abenstein, Gimpel
Alenblum, Leah and children	Abenstein, Braindel
Alenblum, Chana	Abenstein, Laibel
Axelrod, Yosef	Abenstein, Sarah
Axelrod, Shaindel	Abenstein, Henia
Axelrod, Sarah and child	Abenstein, Yaacov
Axelrod, Tzvi and child	Abenstein, David
Axelrod, Laibel, his wife and child	Abenstein, Hinda
Axelrod, Hershel	Abenstein, Eleizor
Axelrod, Yisrael	Abenstein, Gershon
Axelrod, Rachel	Abenstein, Esther
Axelrod, Esther	Abenstein, Baruch
Avramowitz, Minchas-Mendel	Abenstein, Malka and child
Avramowitz, Meir	Abenstein, Gershon
	Abenstein, Hadassa
	Abenstein, Hershel

Abenstein, Paula	Anglister, Sarah
Abenstein, Bracha	Anglister, Laibel
Abenstein, Yaacov	Anglister, Gershon
Abenstein, Chaim	Anglister, Ganendil
Abenstein, Devorah	Anglister, Baruch
Aberkleid, Avraham	Anglister, Moshe Hilleles and family
Aberkleid, Esther	Ainshindler, Yisrael-Laib
Aberkleid, Chana	Aroniak, Meir
Aberkleid, David and his two children	Aroniak, Liba
Aberkleid, Serel	Aroniak, Benyamin
Aberkleid, Moshe	Aroniak, Sarah with children
Aberkleid, Yitzhak	Aroniak, Matis and his wife
Orlovsky, Zalman	Aroniak, Ezra and his wife
Orlovsky, Nata	Aidenboim, Shmerl and his wife
Apelgot, Mendel	Aidenboim, Pinchas
Apelgot, Esther	Aidenboim, Yisrael
Apelgot (Tenenboim), Hinda	Aidenboim, Yaacov and his wife
Apelgot, Liza	Aidelman, Yosef
Apelgot, Esther	Aidelman, Gitel
Apelgot, Moshe	Axelrod, Menucha
Aidelsberg, Yichiel, his wife and child	Axelrod, Yaacov
Apelboim, Rachel and her four children	Axelrod, David-Yichiel
Apelboim, Aba, his wife and child	Axelrod, Liba
Aizenman, Israel and wife	Axelrod, Yisrael-David
Aizenman, Isaac, his wife and child	Axelrod, Chaya
Aizenman, Shalom	Auzurpator, Yidel
Albik, Simcha	Auzurpator, Chaya-Ita
Albik, Raizela	Auzurpator, Rinka
Albik, Bat-Sheva	Auzurpator, Moshe
Albik, Yisrael-Ahron	Auzurpator, Tova
Albik, Esther	Abarbanel, Ahron
Albik, Elka	Abarbanel, Matel
Apel, Moshe	Abarbanel, Rivka
Apel, Chana and child	
Apelhut, Yisraelish	
Apelhut, Yochbed	
Apelhut, Ahron and wife	
Apelhut, Yaacov	
Apelhut, Sarah	
Apelhut, Levi-Yitzhak	
Apelhut, Sosha	
Apelhut, Chaim	
Apelhut, Esther	
Apelhut, Shmai	
Apelhut, Faigel and two children	
Anglister, Yona	
Anglister, Rachel	

B [BET or VET]

Buckspan, Rivka
 Buckspan, Moshe
 Buckspan, Genya
 Buckspan, Gitel
 Bergman, Yitzhak
 Bergman (Samet), Esther
 Bergman, Yisrael-Ahron
 Borkowitz, Avigdavid
 Borkowitz, Necha
 Borkowitz, Rivka
 Borkowitz, Gnendil
 Borkowitz, Hertza and wife
 Blundovsky, Moshe
 Blundovsky, Andja
 Blundovsky, Roza
 Blundovsky, Hela
 Borovsky, Hershel
 Borovsky, Rachel
 Bandman, Miriam with her two children
 Blechstein, Miriam and daughter
 Bluestein, Sifra
 Bluestein, Hershel
 Bluestein, Sarah
 Bluestein, Pesach
 Bluestein, Mindela
 Bluestein, Shepsel
 Bluestein, Miriam
 Bronspigel, Shloma
 Bronspigel, Aba
 Bronspigel, Esther
 Bronspigel, Raizel, her husband Melech and children
 Bubis, Yehusha
 Bubis, Chanatasha
 Bubis, Yaacov
 Bubis, Dina and child
 Bubis, Hodes
 Bubis, Chiltsha
 Baber, Chaim-Laib
 Baber (Shulman), Miriam
 Baber, Yechzikiel
 Borenstein, Moshe
 Borenstein (Shulman), Baila
 Borenstein, Faigela
 Baitsman, Moshe
 Baitsman, M.

Becherblut, Avraham, and his wife

Becherblut, Nechamia and family

Baigelman, Laibish

Baigelman, Chaya

Baigelman, Chava

Baigelman, Moshe

Baigelman, Dina

Baniochovsky, Rachel

Baniochovsky, Yosef

Bornstein, Shmuel

Bornstein, Sarah

Bornstein, Esther-Malka

Bornstein, Eltsha

Borstein, Yonah and family

Budner, Adela

Budner, Yosef and his two children

Bluestein, Moshe

G [GIMEL]

Gelibter, Yosef

Gelibter, Esther

Grabovnik, Chaim-Shmuel

Grabovnik, Matel

Grabovnik, Shiendel

Grabovnik, Serka

Grabovnik, Rivka

Grabovnik, Chaya

Goldstein, Meir

Goldstein, Sasha

Goldstein, Sonya

Goldstein, Gitel

Goldstein, Aidel

Goldstein, Gadlihu

Goldstein, Ruzja

Goldstein, Hershel

Goldstein, Devorah

Goldstein, Yitzhak

Goldstein, Raizel

Goldstein, Yosef

Goldstein, Leah

Goldstein, Luba and her child

Gorfinkel, Yisrael

Gorfinkel, Perela

Gorfinkel, Ita

Gorfinkel, Chava

Gorfinkel, Yosef
 Gorfinkel, Ahron
 Gorfinkel, Leah
 Gorfinkel, Kraindel
 Guterman, Yaacov
 Gerecht, Moshe-Yosef
 Gerecht, Leah
 Gerecht, Yididia
 Greenglass, Halevi-Yitzhak
 Greenglas, Rachel
 Greenglas, Moshe
 Greenglas, Bluma
 Greenglas, Chana
 Greenglas, Yochved
 Goldfinger, David and family
 Goldfinger, Yichiel
 Goldfinger, Tzvi
 Gedanken, Avraham
 Gezjevia, David
 Gezjevia, Sarah
 Goldfarb, Hershel
 Goldfarb, Golda
 Goldfarb, Tsharna
 Goldfarb, Avraham
 Goldfarb, Rachel
 Goldfarb, Devorah
 Goldfarb, Mirela
 Goldfarb, Etel
 Goldfarb, Rivka
 Goldfarb, Moshe
 Goldberg, Moshe
 Goldberg, Tzirel
 Goldberg, Moshe
 Goldberg, Esther and two children
 Goldberg, Pinchas
 Goldsobel, Avraham and family
 Goldberger, Yaacov and children
 Goldman, Mordechai-Shmuel
 Goldman, Rachel
 Goldman, Pinchas, his wife and children
 Goldman, Laibish
 Goldman, Hershel
 Goldman, Leah with her husband
 Goldman, Miriam
 Goldman, Devorah
 Goldman, Chaya
 Goldman, Esther

Goldman, Enzil
 Goldman, Perel
 Greenberg, Avraham and family
 Greenberg, Faigela and family
 Greenberg, Mordechai
 Gropak, Moshe
 Golombek, Raizela
 Golombek, Eliezer
 Golombek, Chaya
 Golombek, Yididia

D [DALET]

Daitsher, Laibel
 Daitsher, Rachel
 Daitsher, Mordechai
 Daitsher, Esther
 Daitsher (Lipman), Chaya
 Daitsher, Yechzakal
 Daitsher, Chaya
 Daitsher, Raizel
 Daitsher, Nach
 Daitsher, Ahron
 Daitsher, Laibel
 Daitsher, Esther
 Daitsher, Gaula
 Daitsher, Rivka
 Danovitch, Avraham
 Danovitch, S. and children
 Danovitch, Perel
 Danovitch, Hendel
 Danovitch, Raizel
 Danovitch, Esther
 Draiblat, Laibel with his 8 children
 Draiblat, Dina
 Draiblat, Sarah-Rivka
 Dickstein, Zlata
 Dickstein, Chaya
 Dickstein, Avraham-Wolf

H [HEY]

Hochman, Chava
Hochman, Yonah
Hochman (Urman), Mindel
Hochman, Mendel
Hochman, Yonah
Hochman, Shalom
Hochman, Raizel
Hershenkraft, David
Hershenkraft, Zlata and her children
Hershenkraft, Moshe
Hoftman, Chava
Hoftman, Yechzakal
Hoftman, Sarah and her child
Hofman, Yosef
Hofman, Shalom
Hofman, Raizel
Hofman, Motel
Hofman, Gamliel
Hofman, Hershel
Hofman, Moshe
Hofman, Yehudit
Hofman, Yaacov
Hofman, Yonah
Heldman, Leah-Gitel
Heldman, Moshe
Heldman, Tania
Heldman, Mendel
Heldman, Liuba
Heldman, Ahron, his wife and children
Heldman, Kalman and wife
Horowitz, Zlata-Dova
Horowitz, Yechzakal
Horwitz, Betzalal
Horwitz, Rivka
Horwitz, Zlata
Horwitz, Yechzakal
Horwitz, Laibel and family
Honigboim, Ben-Tzion
Honigboim, Chava
Honigboim, Bluma
Honigboim, Raizel
Hochman, Moshe-Yosef
Halbesberg, Pesel
Halbesberg, Moshe-Chaim
Halbesberg, Ahron

Hershman, Lozer
Hershman, Itchela
Hershman, Laibel
Hershman, Hershel
Hershman, Nachum-Leizor
Hershman, Sarah-Leah
Hershman, Rachel
Hershman, Chana
Hershman, Mirela
Hershman, Rivka

W [VAV]

Waintraub, Hershel
Waintraub, Fraindel
Waintraub, Moshe
Waintraub, Genendil
Wasserman, David
Wasserman, Sarah
Wasserman, Devorah
Wasserman, Simcha, his wife and child
Wasserman, Rivka
Wasserman, Moshe
Wasserman, Hinda
Wasserman, Baltsha
Wasserman, Malka
Wasserman, Zlatka
Wasserman, Efraim
Wasserman, Yaacov
Wasserman, Nechma
Wasserman, Rivka
Wasserman, Shaindel
Wasserman, Yechiel
Wasserman, Chana
Wasserman, Chela
Wasserman, Abala
Wasserman, Shiya
Wienberg, Zlata
Wienberg, Meir and his three children
Wiesboim, Leah-Gitel
Wiesboim, Mordechai
Wiesboim, Yochbed
Wiesboim, Sarah-Rivka
Wiesboim, Chana-Perel
Wiesboim, Masha
Wiesboim, Itka

Volsky, Avraham
 Volsky, Shaindel
 Volsky, Yisrael
 Volsky, Mendel
 Volsky, Yaacov
 Weichman, Yesheshker
 Weichman, Elai
 Weichman, Chana
 Weichman, Esther
 Weichman, Yitzhak
 Weichman, Manes
 Weichman, Yosef
 Weichman, Manes
 Weichman, Chana-Freidel
 Weichman, Moshe-Baruch
 Weichman, Henya-Roiza
 Weichman, Mates
 Weichman, Tova
 Weichman, Henech
 Weichman, Elai
 Weichman, Braindel
 Weichman, Moshe-Laib
 Weichman, Mates
 Weichman, Baila
 Weichman, Chava
 Wachhoizer (Tzeshinsky), Tubala
 Vanapol, Yarme
 Vanapol, Ahron
 Vanapol, Andjza
 Vanapol, Yosef
 Weinstein, Yaacov
 Weinstein, Devorah
 Weinstein, Yitzhak
 Weinstein, Rachel
 Weinstein, Bina
 Weinberg, Nach and wife
 Weinberg, Yitzhak and wife
 Weinberg, Yisrael
 Weitzman, Chaya
 Weitzman, Leah and children
 Weitzenblit, Faiga (daughter of Naftely Ekheizer)
 Viejbitsky, David and family
 Viejbitsky, Simon
 Viejbitsky, Hershel
 Viejbitsky, Esther
 Weinberg, Matela
 Weinberg, Mendela

Weinberg, Ita
 Weinberg, Chana
 Weinberg, Berela
 Wienwurtzel, Chaim-Simon
 Wienwurtzel, Shaindela

Z [ZAYIN]

Zilberklaid, Berish
 Zilberklaid, Rivkala
 Zilbergeld, Yehusha
 Zigman, Aba
 Zigman, Hela
 Zilbergberg, Yisrael-Yosef
 Zilbergberg, Shaindel
 Zilbergberg, Yaacov
 Zilbergberg, Shmuel
 Zilbergberg, Rivka
 Zilbergberg, Perela
 Zilbergberg, Esther
 Zilbergberg, Moshe
 Zilbergberg, Tova
 Zilberg, Esther
 Zilbergberg, Shmuel
 Zilbergberg (Perlman), Rivka
 Zilbergberg, Nach
 Zilberboim, Chava
 Zilberboim, Marila
 (Daughter of Menchas-Mendel Ekheizer)
 Zilberboim, Avraham Meir (son of Moshe)
 Zilberboim, Moshe David (son of Mendel)
 Zusman, Yisrael-David
 Zusman, Motel
 Zysman, Chava
 Zysman, Ahron-Moshe
 Zyman, Fishel
 Zyman, Yichael-Yitzhak
 Zyman, Simon and wife
 Zilberman, David
 Zilberman, Sarah (Saraka)
 Zilberman, Chaim (son of Davidel)
 Zilberman, Leah
 Zilberman, Chaim (son of Yoska)
 Zilberman, Tova and family
 Zilberben, Avraham and family
 Zaltzman, Henich

Zaltzman, Pesil
 Zilberstein, Moshe-Yitzhak
 Zilberstein, Sarah
 Zamdner, Leizor and wife
 Zamdner, Chaya and sister
 Zamdner, Ratza
 Zaltzhendler, Levi-Godel and family
 Zaltzhendler, Moshe-Hersh and family
 Zaltzhendler, Yisrael
 Zjelichovsky and family
 Zjelichovsky, Arya and family
 Zjelichovsky, Yitzhak and family
 Zjelichovsky, Motel and family
 Zaborovsky, Yitzhak
 Zaborovsky, Esther
 Zaborovsky, Betzelal

T [TET]

Teichman, Leizor
 Teichman, Aida-Rachel
 Teichman, Hershel
 Tenner, Yisrael-Tovya
 Tenner, Henich
 Tishlerman, Yosef
 Tishlerman, Yosef
 Taishinder, Avraham
 Tenenboim, Shmuel-Laib
 Tenenboim, Sarah
 Tenenboim, Chava
 Tenenboim, Hodes with her two children
 Tenenboim, Chaim
 Tenenboim, Hershel and family
 Treger, Pinchas and wife
 Traler, Laibel and children
 Traler, Sasha
 Traler, Pesach and family
 Traler, Shmuel
 Traler, Chaya
 Traler, Leizor
 Traler, Efraim and family
 Traler, Yehudit
 Traler, Perel
 Traler, Sarah
 Tishelman, Natan
 Tishelman, Yosef

Tishelman, Yochbed
 Tishelman, Yitzhak
 Tishelman, Yaacov
 Turbiner, Natan David
 Turbiner, Mala
 Turbiner, Basha, her husband and child
 Turbiner, Yehudit, her husband and child
 Turbiner, Leizor-Ber
 Tirangel, Elai
 Tirangel, Leah
 Tirangel, Esther-Nesha
 Tirangel, Mindel
 Tirangel, Tzirel
 Tirangel, Roza
 Tirangel, David
 Tirangel, Yidel
 Tirangel, Chana
 Tirangel, Chaya
 Tirangel, Osher
 Tirangel, Yisrael-Ahron
 Tirangel, Moshe-Melech
 Trokenberg, Yekotiel
 Trokenberg, Shmuel
 Trokenberg, Yekel
 Trokenberg, Minchas
 Trokenberg, Rivka
 Trokenberg, Esther
 Tshatzkes, Matil and family
 Taitelboim, Faivel
 Taitelboim, Moshe
 Taitelboim, Rafael
 Taitelboim, Hinda
 Taitelboim, Faiga
 Taitelboim, Sima
 Taitelboim, Michal
 Taitelboim, Dova
 Taitelboim, Hershel
 Taitelboim, Davidel
 Taitelboim, Moshe
 Taitelboim, Aidel

Y [YOD]

Yom-Tov, Yisrael
 Yom-Tov, Rivka
 Yom-Tov, Miriam
 Yom-Tov, Sarah
 Yom-Tov, Yichiel-Nachmiya
 Yom-Tov, Mindel
 Yom-Tov, Nata, his wife and 6 children
 Yom-Tov, David, his wife and child
 Yom-Tov, Moshe-Eleizor
 Yom-Tov, Tzirela and child
 Yom-Tov, Saul
 Yom-Tov, Devorah
 Yom-Tov, Moshe-Chaim
 Yom-Tov, Sara-Tzirel
 Yom-Tov, Hinda
 Yom-Tov, Tzedok
 Yamovitch, Chaim-Yitzhak
 Yamovitch, Leah
 Yamovitch, David
 Yamovitch, Yisrael
 Yamovitch, Tzvi
 Yamovitch, Hershel

CH or C [CHAF or KAF]

Cholewinsky, Yosef Nata, his wife and children
 Cholewinsky, Shmai
 Cholewinsky, Mendel and family
 Cholewinsky, Simcha
 Cholewinsky, David
 Cholewa, Mendel
 Cholewa, Lina
 Kohen, Yitzhak

L [LAMED]

Lindower, Avraham
 Lindower, Chana
 Lindower, Mendel
 Lindower, Perela
 Lindower, Chayala
 Lindower, Nesha
 Lindower, Leizor

Lindower, Moshe
 Lindower, Shmaiyla
 Lindower, Gershon
 Lubrecht, Elai
 Lubrecht, Devorah
 Lubrecht, Yisrael
 Leicht, Simon
 Luxemburg, Berel
 Luxemburg, Chaya
 Luxemburg, Laibel
 Luxemburg, Elai
 Luxemburg, Yedidia
 Luxemburg, Yechiel and family
 Luxemburg, Genya
 Luxemburg, Shaindel
 Luxemburg, Peretz
 Luxemburg, David
 Luxemburg, Tzepora and her 3 children
 Luxemburg, Freida
 Luxemburg, Monis
 Luxemburg, Leahtasha
 Luxemburg, Shmuel-Nachum
 Langleben, Akiba
 Langleben, Sara-Gitel
 Langleben, Shmuel
 Langleben, Faiga
 Langleben, Yaacov
 Langleben, Tzirel
 Langleben, Roza
 Lachman, Chaim
 Libnitzky, Moshe
 Libnitzky, Rachel and her three children
 Lewin, Mordechai-Laib
 Lewin, Shaindel
 Lewin, Shloma
 Lewin, Devorah
 Lewin, Tzesha
 Lichtesh, Malka
 Lichtesh, Yechiel
 Lichtesh, Chaina
 Lichtesh, Perel
 Lichtesh, Itche
 Lichtesh, Rivka
 Lichtesh, Laibel and wife
 Lichtesh, Sarah
 Lichtesh, Perel
 Lichtesh, Fruma

Lichtesh, Kalman and his children
 Lakerman, Sarah
 Lechbroit, Pinchas
 Lechbroit, Rachel
 Lechbroit, Benyamin
 Lazvert, Makes
 Lazvert, Ziesel and children
 Lorberboim, Dina
 Lorberboim, Yoel (son of Moshe)
 Lichtenstein, Mendel (teacher)
 Lichtenstein, Esther
 Lichtenstein, Yisrael
 Lichtenstein, Moshe
 Lichtenstein, Berel
 Lichtenstein, Chaim
 Lichtenstein, Chaya
 Levkovitch, Sarah
 Levkovitch, Yisrael-David
 Levkovitch, Menucha
 Levkovitch, Chaya
 Laibebruder, Yoska
 Laibebruder, Baila
 Laibebruder, Isaac
 Laibebruder, Shmai
 Laibebruder, Etil
 Laibebruder, Chana
 Laibebruder, Nachum-Laib
 Laibebruder, Chaya-Basha
 Laibebruder, Moshe
 Laibebruder, Nesha
 Laibebruder, Leizor
 Laibebruder, Moshala
 Laibebruder, Gershon
 Laibebruder, Henela
 Laibebruder, Chaim
 Laibebruder, Velvel
 Laibebruder, Leah

M [MEM]

Melaver, Neshela
 Melaver, Chaim
 Melaver, Royzela
 Melaver, Yitzhak
 Mandelboim, Itche-Meir
 Mandelboim, Hersh-Nachman

Mandelboim, Frumit
 Mandelboim, Yechiel
 Mandelboim, Hersh-Nachum
 Mandelboim, Neftaly
 Mandelboim, Laibel
 Mandelboim, Sheva
 Mandelboim, Neftaly
 Mandelboim, Zjeni
 Mandelboim, Basha
 Milgroim, Hinda
 Milgroim, Yaacov
 Milgroim, Miriam
 Milgroim, Motel
 Milgroim, Esther
 Milgroim, Panya
 Milgroim, Tzvi
 Milgroim, Chana
 Milgroim, Avraham
 Milgroim, Sarah
 Milgroim, Zeb
 Milgroim, Yedidia
 Milgroim, Godel and family
 Mikowsky, Mindel
 Mikowsky, Avraham
 Meltzer, Yerchamiel and family
 Mandelail, Mendel
 Mandelail, Rochtsha
 Mandelail, Laibel
 Mandelail, Meir-Shmuel
 Mync, Yisrael
 Mync, Sarah
 Mync, Moshe and wife
 Mync, Malka
 Mync, Minka
 Mync, Rivka

N [NUN]

Nisenboim, Chaim with his wife
 Nisenboim, Ahron-Yitzhak, his wife and children
 Nisenboim, Efraim-David, his wife and children
 Nisenboim, Simka
 Nisenboim, Yaacov
 Nisenboim, Rivka
 Nisenboim, Nesha
 Nisenboim, Yitzhak
 Nisenboim, Nechma
 Nisenboim, Chaya
 Nisenboim, Moshe
 Nisenboim, Hersh
 Nisenboim, Basha
 Nisenboim, Efraim
 Nodelfodim, Eleizer
 Nodelfodim, Devorah
 Nodelfodim, Leah
 Nodelfodim, Luba
 Nodelfodim, Avraham
 Nodelfodim, Sender and wife
 Nodelman, Yaacov
 Nodelman, Malka
 Nodelman, Shmuen
 Nodelman, Shloma
 Nodelman, Kalman
 Nodelman, Beniek
 Novomaisky, Avraham
 Nelkin, Yaacov
 Nelkin, Tzevyah-Leah
 Nelkin, David-Yechiel
 Nelkin, Luba
 Nisenblatt, David
 Nisenblatt, Baila
 Nisenblatt, Leah
 Nisenblatt, Shaindel
 Nisenblatt, Chanatsha
 Nisenblatt, Gutsha
 Nisenblatt, Yachtsha
 Nisenblatt, Itche
 Nisenblatt, Bracha
 Nisenblatt, Avraham
 Nisenblatt, Lolek
 Nisenblatt, Avraham
 Nisenblatt, Itchela
 Naihaviz, Yosef, his son Yaacov and family

Naihaviz, Hersh and family
 Naihaviz (Shulman), Bracha
 Naihaviz, Chaya-Tasha
 Naihaviz, Nora
 Nai, Mirel (daughter of Minchas-Mendel)
 Nai, Nachmiya and family

S [SAMECH]

Sigal, Braina
 Sigal, Tzvi
 Sigal, Etel
 Sigal, Klara
 Sigal, Avraham
 Stanislawsky, Tova
 Samet, Yidel
 Samet, Faiga-Leah
 Samet, Dav and wife
 Samet, Raizel and husband
 Samet, Mendel
 Samet, Sarah
 Samet, Moshe
 Samet, Yosef
 Sovol, Miriam
 Sovol, Pinchas
 Stotzky, Sasha
 Stotzky, Pesach

E [AYEN]

Ekheizer, David (son of Minchas-Mendel)
 Ekheizer, Yosef (son of Minchas-Mendel)
 Ekheizer, David (son of Naftely)
 Ekheizer, Chana (daughter of Naftely)
 Ekheizer, Leah
 Ekheizer, Yisrael (son of Naftely)
 Ekheizer, Chava (daughter of Naftely)
 Ekheizer, Rivka (daughter of Naftely)
 Ekheizer, Yostina (daughter of Naftely)
 Ekheizer, Nechamya (son of Moshe David)
 Ekheizer, Chayala (daughter of Yaacov)
 Ekheizer, Chana (daughter of Moshe Lorberboim)
 Ekheizer, Pola (daughter of Yosef Rueben)
 Elenboim, Leah-Hinda
 Edelman, Gitel

Elenblum, Shloma
 Elenblum, Zisel
 Elenblum, Moshe
 Elenblum, Faiga
 Elenblum, Sarah
 Elenblum, Shmuen
 Elenblum, Fradel
 Elenblum, Chana (son of Berel)
 Elenblum, Ahron and family
 Elenblum, Yosef and family
 Elenblum, Chana (son of Shloma)
 Europa, Rina
 Europa, Lozer and family
 Europa, Itche
 Europa, Faiga
 Europa, Chaim-Yona
 Europa, Pesel
 Eldstein, Esther

P or F [PEY or FEY]

Puterflam, Sara-Faiga
 Puterflam, Yaacov
 Puterflam, Rivkala
 Puterflam, Gershon
 Puterflam, Esther
 Puterflam, Elka
 Puterflam, Eleizor
 Puterflam, Manya
 Puterflam, Esther
 Puterflam, Gershon
 Puterflam, Nechma
 Puterflam, Shloma
 Puterflam, Riva
 Puterflam, Moshe
 Puterflam, Nechmiya
 Puterflam, Avraham-Mendel
 Puterflam, Ita-Dina
 Puterflam, Nechma
 Puterflam, Sheva
 Puterflam, Gershon
 Puterflam, Esther
 Puterflam, Malka
 Puterflam, Devorala
 Puterflam, Matala
 Puterflam, Chanala

Puterflam, Hershel
 Puterflam, Leah
 Puterflam, Elka
 Puterflam, Nesha
 Puterflam, Pesa
 Puterflam, Sifra
 Puterflam, Sarah
 Puterflam, Moshe
 Puterflam, Gershon
 Puterflam, Moshe
 Puterflam, Yedidia
 Puterflam, Zechriya
 Puterflam, Esther
 Puterflam, Gershon
 Puterflam, Nechma
 Puterflam, Shloma
 Puterflam, Riva
 Puterflam, Moshe
 Puterflam, Shmuel
 Puterflam, Nechmiya
 Puterflam, Avraham-Mendel
 Puterflam, Ita-Dena
 Puterflam, Nechma
 Puterflam, Sheva
 Puterflam, Gershon
 Puterflam, Esther
 Puterflam, Malka
 Puterflam, Devorala
 Puterflam, Matala
 Puterflam, Chanala
 Puterflam, Hershel
 Puterflam, Leah
 Puterflam, Elka
 Puterflam, Nesha
 Puterflam, Pesa
 Puterflam, Sifra
 Puterflam, Moshela
 Puterflam, Sarah
 Puterflam, Moshe
 Puterflam, Shmaiya
 Puterflam, Gershon
 Puterflam, Moshe
 Puterflam, Yedidia
 Puterflam, Zechriya
 Puterflam, Gershon, his wife and two children
 Puterflam, Yosef, his wife and two children
 Puterflam, Baila-Gitel and husband

Puterflam, Motel
 Puterflam, Rachel
 Puterflam, Matis and family
 Puterflam, Yosel and family
 Puterflam, Rivka and family
 Puterflam, Rueben
 Puterflam, Esther and family
 Puterflam, Itche and family
 Faingezicht, Moshe
 Faingezicht, Shaindel
 Perlmutter, Faiga
 Perlmutter, Yisrael
 Perlmutter, Moshe
 Perlstein, Yisrael
 Perlstein, Yaacov and family
 Fichtenboim, Yitzhak
 Pudla, Hersh
 Pudla, Dina
 Pudla, Shalom
 Pudla, Yaacov
 Pudla, Basha
 Pudla, Yitzhak
 Pudla, Gitel
 Finkelstein, Yisrael and family
 Feldgayer, Leahla
 Feldgayer, Beniyek (Benyamin)
 Faiyerson, Braindel
 Faiyerson, Meir
 Faiyerson, Itel
 Faiyerson, Moshela
 Faiyerson, Iyanka
 Faiyerson, Rochtsha
 Faiyerson, Hershel
 Faiyerson, Simka
 Faiyerson, Laibel and wife
 Faiyerson
 Puterman, Melech
 Puterman, Chaim
 Puterman, Chana
 Puterman, Moshe
 Puterman, Sarah
 Puterman, Yitzhak
 Puterman, Leon
 Puterman, Melech
 Puterman, Devorah (Wasserman)
 Puterman, Chaim
 Puterman, Chana

Federbush, Yarachmiel
 Federbush, Leah
 Federbush, Maniya
 Friedman, Arya
 Friedman, Perela
 Friedman, Alter (Shucht)
 Friedman, Bina-Rachel
 Friedman, Shmuel, his wife and child
 Friedman, Yaacov, his wife and children
 Friedman, Motela and wife
 Friedman, Berel, his wife and children
 Friedman, Yisraelik
 Friedman, Ruyzja-Mindel
 Perlman, Baruch
 Perlman, Rivka
 Pomerantz, Hershel
 Pomerantz, Chaya
 Pomerantz, Chava
 Feldman, Yoel
 Feldman, Sima
 Feldman, Laibel and family
 Feldman, Esther-Raizel and family
 Feldman, Chana-Sara
 Feldman, Leah
 Feigenblatt, Moshe-Yehuda
 Feigenblatt, Sarah
 Futsman, Tzewetl
 Futsman, Nesha
 Futsman, Baila
 Futsman, Serel
 Futsman, Meir
 Futsman, Gershon
 Futsman, Devorah
 Futsman, Yoska
 Futsman, Serel
 Futsman, Moshela
 Futsman, Gershon
 Futsman, Isaac
 Futsman, Avraham
 Futsman, Naomi
 Futsman, Misha
 Faigenboim, Lozerel
 Faigenboim, Hodel
 Faigenboim, Yidel
 Faigenboim, Eleizor
 Faigenboim, Batzelel
 Faigenboim, Dina

Faigenboim, Mordechai

Faigenboim, Bracha

Fores, Ahron and wife

Prezent, Yisheyhu

Prezent, Leah

Fluk, Mendel

Fluk, Chaya

Fluk, Zlatka

Fluk, Faiga

Fluk, Moshe

Fluk, Hersh-David

Fluk, Dina

Fluk, Shalom

Fluk, Yaacov

Fluk, Yitzhak

Fluk, Shmuel

Fluk, Basha

Fluk, Gitel

Feldweber, Esther

Feldweber, Yaacov

Feldweber, Roza and her child

Flamenboim, Avigdavid-Wolf

Flamenboim, Itka

Flamenboim, Laibish-Mendel

Flamenboim, Devorah-Leah

Flamenboim, Sarah

Flamenboim, Chaim-Ahron

Flamenboim, Meir

Flamenboim, Perela

Flamenboim, Simcha

Flamenboim, Pinchas

Flamenboim, Yesheyhu

Flamenboim, Arya

Fichtenboim, Levi

Fichtenboim, Yosef

Fichtenboim, Gitel

Fichtenboim, Yisrael

Fichtenboim, Levi-Godel

Fichtenboim, Samsha-Mechel and family

Praim, Luba

Praim, Yisrael

TZ [TZADEE]

Tzuckerfain, Yisrael and family

Tzentnarsky, Lazar and wife

Tzentnarsky, Yaacov

Tzentnarsky, Matil

Tzentnarsky, Raizel

Tzukerman, Chaim-Mendel

Tzukerman, Moshe

Tzukerman, Chaya-Baila

Tzukerman, Mendel

Tzukerman, Michael

Tzukerman, Betzelal

Tzukerman

Tzukerman, Sarah

Tzukerman, Itka

Tzukerman, Rachel

Tzukerman, Moshe

Tzukerman, Perel

Tzukerman, Gitel

Tzitrinboim, Shabatai

Tzitrinboim, Sarah

Tzitrinboim, Tova

Tzitrinboim, Ahron

Tzimringblatt, Rivka

Tzimringblatt, Hershel

Tzimbrovitch, Tzadok

Tzimbrovitch, Miriam

Tzimbrovitch, Laibel

Tzimbrovitch, Esther

Tzucker, Avraham

Tzucker, Leizor and wife

Tzucker, Gershon and wife

Tzucker, Shmai and wife

Tzucker, David

Tzucker, Chana-Liba

Tzucker, Sarah

Tzucker, Yidel

Tzucker, Motel

Tzucker, Molly

Tzucker, Yichiel

Tzuckerstein, Zlata

Tzuckerstein, Chaya

Tzuckerstein, Avraham-Wolf

Tzigelman, Nach and wife

Tzvaigenberg, Moshe

Tzvaigenberg, Avraham

Tzvaigenberg, Velvel

Tzvaigenberg, Yisschar-Ber

Tzvaigenberg, Chaya-Sarah

Tzvaigenberg, Matil

Tzirklevitch, Lozer and wife
Tzirklevitch, Ali

K [KOPH]

Katchke, Shmuel
Katchke, Rivka and son
Katchke, Nata
Katchke, Rivka
Katchke, Shmuel
Katchke, Albert
Katchke, Motel
Katchke, Leah
Katchke, Yoel
Katchke, Meir-Shalom
Kleiner, Malka and her child
Kushmirsh, Mendel
Kushmirsh, Sima
Kushmirsh, Gershon, his wife and child
Kushmirsh, Yoel
Kushmirsh, Meir
Kava, Ahron, his wife and child
Kava, Mendel, his wife and child
Kava, Izidor, Doctor
Kava, Devorah
Kava, Shaya, his wife and children
Kushkevitch, Leibetsha
Kushkevitch, Chana
Kushkevitch, David, his wife and two children
Kushkevitch, Sarah, her husband and two children
Kushkevitch, Moshe, his wife and three children
Kushkevitch, Freida and her two children
Kushkevitch, Shloma, his wife and three children
Kushkevitch, Gitel, her husband and two children
Kushkevitch, Tesharna, her husband and two children
Kushkevitch, Miriam
Kabiber, Gitel
Kabiber, Riva
Kershenblatt, Ahron
Kershenblatt, Nesha
Kershenblatt, Sonia
Kershenblatt, Andja
Kershenblatt, Moshe
Kershenblatt, Meir
Kershenblatt, Meir
Koifman, Motel

Koifman, Mintscha
Koifman, Baska
Kannaryenfoygel (Kannarykfogel), Karol
Kannaryenfoygel, Elka and son
Kshinover, Lozer
Kshinover, Fraidel
Kshinover, Zondel
Kshinover, Yichiel and family
Kuptchik, Motel
Kuptchik, Yaacov
Kuptchik, Rachel and children
Kuptchik, Lozer
Kaminsky, Natan
Kaminsky, Sarala
Kaminsky, Ben-Tzion
Kaminsky, Chaim
Kaminsky, Chayala
Kaminsky, Zisela
Kaminsky, Devorah
Kaminsky, Lili
Kaminsky, Yehuda
Kamiyen, Moshe
Kamiyen, Adela
Kuperman, Moshe
Kuperman, Shosh
Kleinman, Avraham-Baruch
Kleinman, Gitel
Kleinman, Rachel
Kleinman, Etel

R [RESH]

Rabinovitch, The Rabbi Gershon and family
Rabinovitch, Sala and family
Rabinovitch, Ahron
Rabinovitch, Chana
Rozen, Moshe
Rabinovitch, Malka
Rabinovitch, Shmuel-Ali
Rabinovitch, Shloma Yechzekiel
Rabinovitch, Saul
Rabinovitch, Nachman
Rozen, Chava
Rozen, Ahron
Rozen, Eleizor
Rozemarin, Shmuel

Rozenblatt, Moshe	Roterman, Yichiel
Rozenblatt, Yisrael	Roterman, Chana
Rozenblatt, Chayala	Roterman, Faiga-Leah and children
Rozenson, Avraham-Yitzhak	Roterman, Leah
Rozenson, Mirela	Roterman, Sheva
Rozenson, Ahron	Roterman, Leizor
Rozeman, Moshe	Roterman, Leahtasha
Rozentzveig, Yisrael	Roterman, Ita
Rozentzveig, Miriam	Roterman, Sheva
Rozentzveig, Avraham	Roterman, Raizela
Rozentzveig, Kalman	Roterman, Esther
Rozentzveig, Raizel	Roterman, Miriam
Rozentzveig, Saul	Roterman, Eleizor
Rozentzveig, Yitzhak	Roterman, Yichzikiel
Rozentzveig, Regina and family	Roterman, Ahron
Rozentzveig, Chana	Roman, Pesa-Mindel
Rozentzveig, Rivka	Roteman, Moshe
Rozentzveig, Gitel	Roteman, Henia
Rozentzveig, Rachel	Reznikovitch, Moshe
Rozentzveig, Avraham	Reznikovitch, Liba
Rozentzveig, Chaim	Reznikovitch, Leah
Rozentzveig, Sarah	Reznikovitch, Sima
Rozentzveig, Meir	Reznikovitch, Tzirel
Rechtman, Shmuel	Reznikovitch, Malka
Rechtman, Gitel	Reznikovitch, Alter
Rechtman, Rachel	Rochenshvalb, Moshe-Melech
Rechtman, Yisrael	Rochenshvalb, Sarah-Leah
Rechtman, Sarala	Rochenshvalb, Yehuda-Laib
Rechtman, David	Rochenshvalb, Yichiel
Rechtman, Sifra	Rochenshvalb, Perel
Rechtman, Mendel	Rochenshvalb, Shaindel
Rechtman, Avraham	Rochenshvalb, Eta
Rechtman, Meir	Rochenshvalb, Isaiyhu-Asar
Rechtman, Zalman	Rochenshvalb, Chaim-Leizor
Rechtman, Etel	Rozenberg, David
Rechtman, Tova	Rozenberg, Sifra
Rechtman, Minka	Rozenberg, Boez
Rechtman, Golda	Rozenberg, Etel
Rechtman, Yosef	Rozenberg, Golda
Rozenman, Samson	Rozenberg, Tsharna
Rozenman, Eleizor	Rozenberg, Sheva
Rozenman, Baila	Rozenberg, Yitzhak
Rozenman, Moshe and wife	Rozenberg, Nachma
Rozenman, Benyamin, his wife and children	Rozenberg, Matil
Rozenman, Chana-Leah, her husband and 4 children	Rozenberg, Chaim
Roterman, Raizel	Rozenberg, Aidel-Leah
Roterman, Ita	Rozenberg, Chaim-Rueben

Rozenberg, Shaindel	Rubinstein, Miriam
Rozenberg, Chaya-Pesel	Rubinstein, Yehusha, wife and child
Rozenberg, Itche	Rubinstein, Yechzikiel
Rozenberg, Moshe	Rubinstein, Leah
Rozenberg, Eleizor	Rubinstein, Roza
Rozenberg (Spektor), Moshe	Rubinstein, Esther
Rozenberg (Spektor), Nachma	Rubinstein, Hershel
Rozenberg (Spektor), Freidala	Rubinstein, Berish and family
Rozenberg (Spektor), Itche	Rubinstein, Chava and her children
Rozenberg, Shalom	Rozenfeld, Hinda
Rozenberg, Leah	Rozenfeld, Avraham
Rozenberg, Rivkala	Rozenfeld, Natan
Rozenberg, Itchela	Rotenberg, Simcha
Rozenberg, Yaacov-Mendel	Rotenberg, Tova
Rozenberg, Arya-Laib	Rotenberg, Malka
Rozenberg, Baila	Rotenberg, Perel
Rozenberg, Yosef	Rotenberg, Itka
Rozenberg, Mendel-Motel (Ritual Slaughterer)	Rotenberg, Meir
Rozenberg, Frumit, her daughter-in-law and children	Rotenberg, Ahron
Rozenberg, Rachel	Reizman, Bronya
Rokman, Esther	Reizman, Bunis and wife
Rozenwein, Pinchas	Reizman, Mendel
Rozenwein, Rivka	Rotshild, Henech
Rozenwein, Berel, his wife and child	Rotshild, Moshe
Rozenwein, Mordechai, his wife and child	Rotshild, Benyamin
Rozenwein, Hershel, his wife and child	Rotshild, Akiba
Rozenwein, Nachmia	Rotshild, Raizela
Rozenwein, Gitela	Rotshild, Rikel
Rozenwein, Ahron	
Rozenwein, Chanatasha	
Rozenwein, Esther and husband	S or Sh [SHIN or SIN]
Rozenwein, Eleizor	
Rozenwein, Rivka	Sherman, Baruch
Rozenwein, Leah	Sherman, Shaindel
Rozenwein, Yitzhak	Sherman, David
Rozenwein, Nachma-Leah	Sherman, Shlomo
Rozenwein, Bracha-Chava	Sherman, Sarah
Rozenwein, Avraham-Laib	Sherman, Nachman-Laib
Rozenwein, Eleizor	Sherman, Yitzhak
Rozenwein, Pesa-Mindel with her husband and child	Sherman, Levi
Rozenwein, Hodel, husband and child	Sherman, Perel-Leah
Rozenwein, Yitzhak-Isaac	Sherman, Fruma
Rozenwein, Chaya-Liba and children	Sherman, Golda
Rubinstein, Shmuel Areles	Sherman, Saul
Rubinstein, Mechla	Sherman, Matil and children
Rubinstein, Alter	Sherman, Pesa
Rubinstein, David	Sherman, Devorah

Sherman, Chana	Shulman, Esther
Sherman, Shalom-Meir	Shulman, Yaacov
Sherman, Yoel	Shulman, Emanuel
Sherman, Nachman-Leizor	Shulman, Chaya-Sarah
Sherman, Avraham-Shloma	Shulman, Yehusha
Sherman, Rochma	Steingart, Raizel
Sherman, Chana-Sprintza	Steingart, Moniek
Steinfeld, Yisrael	Steingart, Chana
Steinfeld, Miriam-Dina	Steingart, Ahron
Steinfeld, Laibish	Steingart, Pola
Steinfeld, Yehudit	Spigner, Nachma
Steinfeld, Perela	Shildkroit, Chaim
Steinfeld, Lusha	Shildkroit, Yichiel
Steinfeld, Monish	Shildkroit, David, his wife and four children
Shteinbuch, Velvel	Shildkroit, Chaya, with her husband and two children
Shteinbuch, Gitel	Shildkroit, Golda and her child
Shteinbuch, Shmuel, his wife and child	Shildkroit, Malka
Shteinbuch, Genendil	Shildkroit, Perel
Shteinbuch, Moshe	Shildkroit, Zelda
Shteinbuch, Pesa	Shildkroit, Chana
Shteinbuch, Yisrael-Laib	Shildkroit, Sarah
Shteinbuch, Rachel	Shildkroit, Yosef
Shteinbuch, Hershel	Shildkroit, Mirela and her two children
Shteinbuch, Shaindel	Shlimer, Malka
Shteinbuch, Berel	Shlimer, Yirchmiel
Shteinbuch, Gitel	Shlimer, Zjisha
Shteinbuch, Sarah	Shlimer, Gitel
Shteinbuch, Rivka	Shlimer, Yirchmiel
Shteinbuch, Malka	Shlimer, Miriam
Shteinbuch, David and his three children	Shlimer, Moshe
Shteinbuch, Devorah	Shlimer, Chaim
Shteinbuch, Pesa, her husband(Nisenboim) and children	Shlimer, Yisrael
Shteinbuch, Yisrael	Shlimer, Esther
Shteinbuch, Miriam-Dina	Shlimer, Rachel
Shteinbuch, Yehudit	Shlimer, Tzima
Shteinbuch, Laibish	Shlimer, Perel
Shteinbuch, Sarah-Rivka	Shlimer, Frumtsha
Shuster, Chaim-Yehuda	Shlimer, Osher-Mordechai
Shuster, Golda	Shlimer, Laibish
Shuster, Baila-Ita	Shlimer, Esther
Shuster, Aiga	Shlimer, Chaya
Shuster, Baruch-Meir	Shmeker, Pesach
Steinboim, David	Shmeker, Chaya
Steinboim, Baila-Rivka	Shmeker, Chaim-Meir
Steinboim, Yitzhak	Shmeker, Tzesha
Steinboim, Freidel	Shmeker, Yisrael
Steinboim, Malka	Shmeker, Saul

Shmeker, Rachel	Shtamler, Lipa
Shmeker, Sarah-Bluma	Shtamler, Shiela
Shmeker, Berel	Shtamler, Bluma
Shmeker, Velvel	Shtamler, Avraham
Shmeker, Chana	Shtamler, Rachel (daughter of Yehusha)
Shmeker, Rachel	Shtamler, Raizel
Shmeker, Daniel	Shtamler, Laibel
Shmeker, Chava	Shtamler, Faiga
Shmeker, Chana	Shtamler, Sheva
Shmeker, Rachel	Shtamler, Leah
Shmeker, Yichiel	Shtamler, Rachel (daughter of Avraham)
Shmeker, Leah	Strechman, Leah
Shmeker, Chana	Strechman, Molly
Shmeker, Rachel	Szajnzicht, Chaim-Hallel
Shmeker, Yosef	Szajnzicht, Frumit
Shilinger, Shmuel	Shapiro, Chana
Shilinger, Itela	Shapiro, Moshe
Shilinger, Avraham	Shapiro, Blumtsha
Shilinger, Yisrael	Shapiro, Mensha, his wife and children
Shilinger, Elihu	Shapiro, Yehudit and daughter
Shilinger, Chaya	Shapiro, Golda and husband
Shwartzberg, Wolf	Shapiro, Yankela (son of Chana)
Shwartzberg, Raizel	Shapiro, Chaya
Shwartzberg, Rachel	Shapiro, Yankela (son of Mensha)
Shwartzberg, Yona	Shtamfater, Liba
Shwartzberg, Sarah	Shtamfater, Efraim
Shwartzberg, Chaya	Shneiderman, Chava
Shwartzberg, Yedidia	Shneiderman, Hertzog
Shwartzberg, Yosef	Shneiderman, Esther
Shilling, Esther	
Shilling, Moshe	
Shilling, Yochbed	
Shilling, Pinchas	
Shilling, Aiga and her children	
Shilling, Yitzhak	
Shilling, Tova	
Shilling, Laibel and family	
Sharfhartz, Yitzhak-Shochet	
Sharfhartz, Yichiel	
Sharfhartz, Yaacov	
Sharfhartz, Rachel	
Sharfhartz, Nachum	
Shtamler, Hallel and wife	
Shtamler, Peretz and family	
Shtamler, Chaim-Rueben and family	
Shtamler, Shloma	
Shtamler, Shaindel and family	



Arye Agassi, zal

Born Nissan 21, 5704 [1944] -- Fell in combat on Sivan 25, 5729 [1969]

Arik and his comrades, zal, kept the enemies out of the way.

Arik, zal, with his red berret and paratrooper wings, in IDF uniform, was handsome. It was a joy to meet him and to talk to him on his past experiences.

THE PAIN IS GREAT!
MAY WE NEVER KNOW SORROW AGAIN!

In Eternal Memory

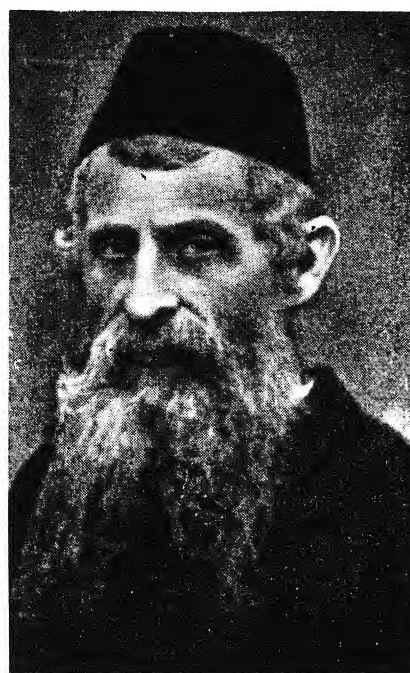
Parents: Chanah and Elimelech Agassi (Rozenberg)

Sisters: Brachah and Dvorah / Kibbutz Yif'at

THREE GENERATIONS WHO THE GERMAN VILLIANS
KILLED IN ONE STROKE IN OUR HOUSEHOLD



Our warm and dear mother
Rochma Eichenbrenner, zal
(daughter of Pinchas)
born July 6, 1871
died May 7, 1942
in the Sobibor death camp.



Our unforgettable and dear
father
Ahron Eichenbrenner, zal
(son of Reb Chaim-Yidel)
born March 7, 1870,
died September 12, 1942.

FOR THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF THE PUBLIC SERVANTS!

*In Eternal Sorrow -- Their sons:
Meir, Tzvi, Simcha, Yidel*



Our dear, unforgettable
warm mother
Frumet Mandelboim (Rozenberg)
zal
born July 1, 1879;
killed December 6, 1943
in the Warsaw ghetto

FOR THE ETERNAL MEMORY
OF THE PUBLIC SERVANTS!

In Continual Sorrow:
Daughter **Hadassa Eichenbrenner**
Son **Moshe Mandelboim**

TO THE MEMORY OF OUR DEAR YOUNG MAN

David Gutmark, zal

who was killed by the Poles in the
forest of Ryki -- July 28, 1944.

When the Red army neared Demblin he
and 70 Jews fled from the camp and hid
themselves in the field among the high
stocks of grain where the A.K. bandits
found him and murdered him with almost
all of the others who had escaped.

Forever Remembered By:
Tzvi Eichenbrenner





OUR FAITHFUL, GIVING
SISTER,

Leah-Tema Eichenbrenner
zal

born January 3, 1911,
killed May 7, 1942
with her little daughter

Sara-Dina Strechman

FOR THE ETERNAL
MEMORY OF THE
PUBLIC SERVANTS!

In Eternal Sorrow:
Meir, Tzvi, Simcha and Yidel

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF MY DEAR FAMILY:



Hershel Abenstein, zal

Gershon Abenstein

Hadassa Abenstein

Hershel Abenstein

Poleh Abenstein

Bracha Abenstein

Yaacov Abenstein

Chaim Abenstein

Devorah Abenstein

Ahron Avarbanel

Motel Avarbanel

Moshe Kamin

Adela Kamin

Forever Remembered By:

Yesheyihu and Fella Abenstein and family

Chana Kamin / Holon

FOR THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS!



Yisrael Rozentzveig



Avram Rozentzveig



Miriam Rozentzveig

In Sorrow:

Genya, Baruch Amitz and family / Israel

Regina Pikholtz and family / New York

Chana Angel and family / Vienna

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS WHO WERE
KILLED IN THE HOLOCAUST



Our mother
Esther (Etil) Ontoiglich



Our father
Isaac Ontoiglich



Our sister
Sheva Ontoiglich



Our sister
Freida Ontoiglich

In Eternal Memory:

Sarah Buckspan (Ontoiglich) - Tel Aviv

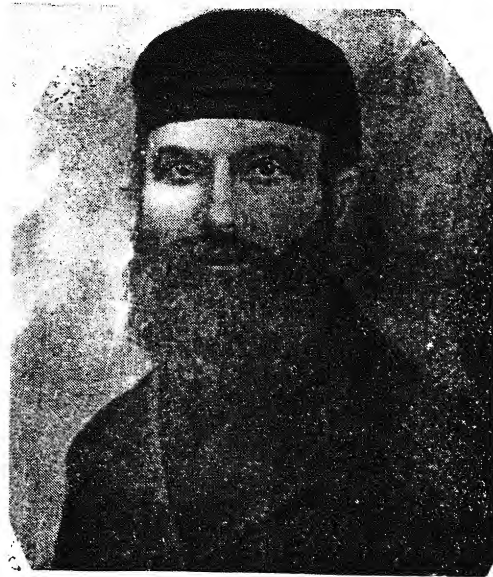
Tova Raif (Ontoiglich) - Nua Ovez

Moshe Telmur (Ontoiglich) - Renna

FOR THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF THE PUBLIC SERVANTS!



Milcha Buckspan, zal



Moshe Buckspan, zal

Our father **Moshe Buckspan**
who died in Demblin

Our mother **Milcha Buckspan**
who died in Israel

Our brother **Ahron Buckspan**
who died in Demblin

His wife **Rivka Buckspan**
who died in the Holocaust



Rivka and Ahron Buckspan, zal

In Eternal Memory:

Arye Buckspan / Tel Aviv

Pesah Buckspan (Rozenberg) / Tel Aviv

Michela Buckspan (Kaplansky) / Brazil

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY



Rachel and Yoneh Anglister, zal



Freindel Weintraub and children, zal

Our sister **Rachel**
with her husband **Yoneh Anglister**

Our sister **Freindel**
with her husband **Hershel Weintraub**
and four children

Murdered by the Hitler murderers

Forever Remembered By:
Leibel Buckshpan / Tel-Aviv
Pesah Rozenberg (Buckshpan) / Tel-Aviv
Michela Kaplansky (Buckshpan) / Brazil

IN ETERNAL MEMORY OF OUR DEAR AND UNFORGETTABLE MARTYRS,
THE VICTIMS OF THE NAZI VILLIANS.

My father, **Yehusha Bubis**

My mother, **Chantshe Bubis**

My sister, **Hadassa Bubis**

My brother, **Yichiel** and
Yaacov Bubis with his wife **Dina**
and daughter



Yehusha Bubis, zal



Chantshe, Hadassa and Yichiel Bubis



Yaacov Bubis, zal

In Sorrow: Yisrael Bubis



At the unveiling of the grave of **Yisrael Ahron Bantman**
at the cemetery in Demblin

From right to left: Levy Fichtenboim, Shloma Davidek, David Rechtman, Yedidi Milgroim, Zalman Vanapol, Yitzhak Schilling, Yichiel Bantman and his wife, the widow of Reb Yisrael Ahron Bantman, the wife of Yitzhak Schilling.

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER
OUR MARTYRS,
THE VICTIMS OF THE GERMAN BRUTALITY!

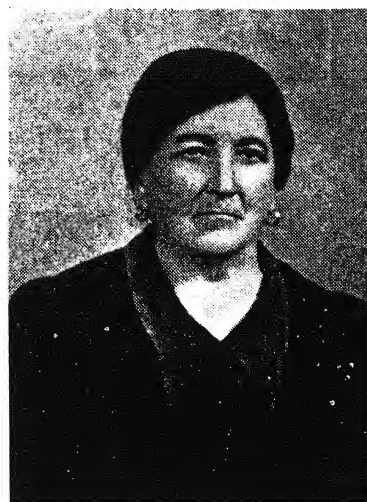
*Forever Remembered By: **Aba Bantman** / Paris*

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY



Betzalel Heldman, who died before the War in Demblin,
with the children of his brother, **Mendel Heldman**, who died in the ghetto

Leah-Gitel Heldman
the wife of Reb Betzalel,
killed
in the Demblin ghetto



Forever Remembered By:
Roza (Heldman) and Aba Bantman / Paris

WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU!



Our brother and
brother-in-law
Moshe Heldman



Our sister-in-law, **Tane Heldman**



Our aunt, **Chava Hochman**

All killed
in the Demblin ghetto

HONORED BE THEIR MEMORY!

*Forever Remembered By: **Roza (Heldman) and Aba Bantman / Paris***

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU!

My Parents:

Gedliya and Rozje Goldstein

My Grandfather and Grandmother:

Yitzhak and Raizel Goldstein

My Brothers:

Hershel and Yitzhak Goldstein

My Sister:

Devorah Goldstein

My Uncles and Aunts:

Hershel and Leah Puterflam

Shalom and Raizel Hoffman

Moshe Hoffman and his wife

Yankel and Doveh Hoffman

My Cousins:

Neshe, Elka and Moshe Puterflam

Matel, Gamliel, Pesach, Hershel

and Poop Hoffman

Gamliel, Yechudit, Yoneh

and Yosel Hoffman



Leah Goldstein (Puterflam)



Gedliya Goldstein



Hershel Goldstein

In Sorrow:

Mendel and Tzepporah Goldstein / Rehovot

Instead of a Gravestone, The Waichman Family

My mother Chava, my father Yesheshker,
Chana my sister
with her beloved boyfriend,
my younger sister Esterke,
Yitzhikel my little brother,
my brother Elya --
all of them were my musical band,
my blood and my flesh.
They were crumbled up and divided up,
without justice
and they became ash.

*

My little sister Esther
comes into my thoughts
and Yitzhak still so young...
you were after all the biggest --
why did they murder you?
You hadn't even had your Bar-Mitzvah yet,
you didn't even understand
against whom you had sinned...
I search for justice, where is it?
Why did they disappear?

*

Who chose the hands to slam
the gas chamber doors behind them?
They howled Shema Yisrael
to the walls endlessly.
Nobody can really understand
something so hideous and painful.
What moved you to
shut your eyes and look to the side
when the flames spread?

*

I am one of your chosen ones.
I have a question for you
with a very short statement:
Their bodies have been transformed to ash
scattered in valley and other places...
I ask why?
Not as a Jew by the side of a corpse
who calls out for a voice to answer
charity will save from death.

*

Now I beg that you should tell me
the precise spot,
where their souls hover.
I want to establish a monument.
With big letters carved in,
I don't want to dishonor them,
with gold and polish.
I want to plant flowers there,
we will all come there
to rest the stone,
even though there won't be
even a trace of their bones.
I want to pray to you
every evening, every morning.
In my heart lays the question --
Will you take care of me?

*

I will give them the little bit of joy
for their inhuman death
and terrible suffering.
They are after all just dust now...
What can move you?
Is that too much to ask of you?
You can do that after all endlessly.
Give them at least a little consolation,
dear God, and -- soul.

What I ask of you
will be good for me
as well as for you.
I ask you, don't ignore this.

*

You know of course a great deal,
you know what my loved ones did
and thought,
they didn't display any great wonder in life,
they just were proud of their children,
lived with your ten commandments,
served you faithfully during life --
Though you didn't forbid them to live,
you didn't permit them a human death...
That really, really hurts me,
it's a cry that goes up to heaven!
Our fate you always
pour over them.
I have ended!

David Waichman / New York

WE WILL ALWAYS FEEL SORROW FOR YOU



My brother **Simcha**,
his wife and son



My father Reb **David Wasserman**, zal
beloved Modzjitzer

My mother **Sara**,
the good hearted wife and dear mother

My older sister **Devorah**, her husband **Melech Puterman** and their
two children **Chaim** and **Chanale** -- murdered in the flowering of their age.

*Son and brother **Moshe Wasserman** in Israel*

ETERNAL MEMORY FOR THE PUBLIC SERVANTS, ZAL

Shmuel Nachum Luxenburg
Yosef Gilibter
Zalman Orlovsky
Zalman Vanapol
Leizor Teichman
Moshe Kamin
Laibel Luxenburg
Yoneh Burstein
Berrish Zilbergleit
Yaacov Faigenboim
Shloma Elenblum
Yisrael Gorfinkel
Levy Fichtenboim
Yosef Hoftman
Arye Zlichovsky

Shalom Puterflam
Yitzhak Schilling
David Rubenstein
Feivel Lindenboim
Yaacov Perlstein
Rivka Yom-Tov
Chiltzya Bubis
Tzevya Opis
Chaim Zilberman (son of Yoske)
Moshe Iglitzky
Lozer Faigenboim
Avraham Schilinger
David Goldfinger
Lipa Shtamler
Moshe Rotshild

Remembering Them Forever: Binyamin Zilberman and Arye Buckspan / Israel

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF MY PARENTS, BROTHERS AND FAMILY:

Yankel-Baruch Weissboim
Chavale Weissboim
Leah-Gitel Weissboim
Mordechai Weissboim
Yochved Weissboim
Sara-Rivka Weissboim
Chana-Perel Weissboim
Moshe Weissboim
Itka Weissboim



Chavale Weissboim



Yankel-Baruch Weissboim

In Sorrow: Ahron Weissboim / Ramat-Gan

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF:



Esther Zilberberg, Sara Lichtajz



Rivka Zilberberg (Perlman)



Shmuel Zilberberg, Shulman

*Forever Remembered By: **Chaya Weinberg (Zilberberg)** / Canada*

WITH GREAT SORROW AND SOMBER AGONY WE MOURN THE
MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY WHO DIED AND WERE MURDERED BY THE
NAZIS, YMS [Yimach Shmam, May Their Memory Be Erased]



Chaim Zilberman, zal



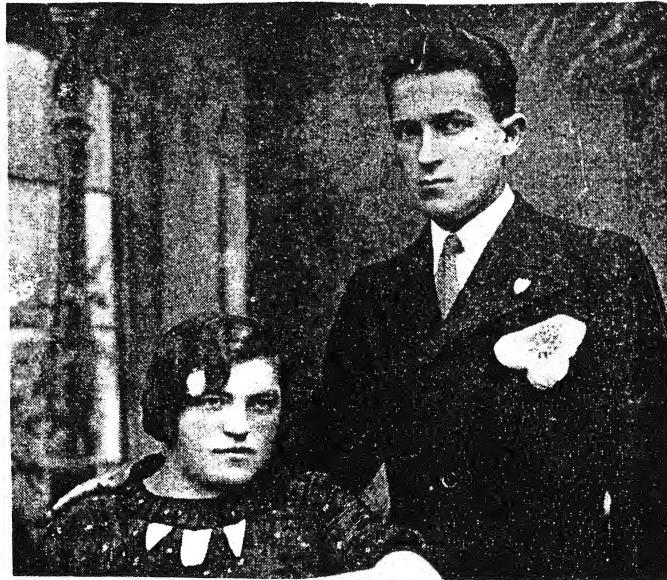
Reb David Zilberman, zal

My father Reb **David**, son of
Reb **Simon Halavey Zilberman**;

My mother Mrs. **Sara**
(Sereka) **Zilberman**
from the house of Temlar;

My brother **Chaim Zilberman**;

My sister **Leah**, her husband
Yisrael Rechtman, and their
daughter **Sarala**



Leah Zilberman, Yisrael Rechtman

MAY GOD AVENGE THEIR DEATH!

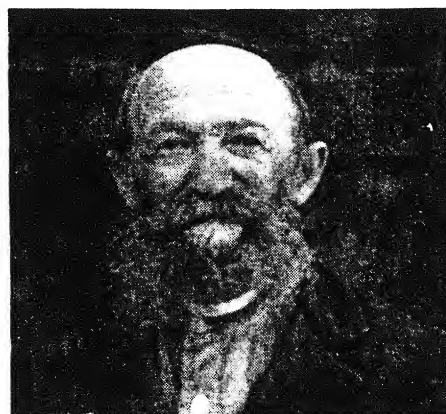
*In Mourning: **Benjamin and Ahova Zilberman** and their sons / **Israel***

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF MY DEAR PARENTS AND BROTHERS:



Krusa Shmeltzstein

Born in Zjelechov in 1874. Died in Tel Aviv in 1953. A dear and devoted mother. An intelligent woman with a lot of knowlege, who helped her husband earn a living.



Avraham Shmeltzstein

Born in 1865 in Pulaw, made aliya to Israel in 1925. Founder of a hasidic institution in Haifa. Author of many books about Zionism and Palestine. He died in Tel Aviv in 1939.



Shmuel Shmeltzstein

Born in Demblin in 1898, died in Brazil in 1944. In his younger years he was active in the worker's movement.



Yitzhak Shmeltzstein

Born in Demblin in 1896, died in America in 1964. Social activist and fighter for equal treatment.



Chaim Shmeltzstein

Born in Demblin in 1892. Came to America in 1935. Helped a lot in taking care of the poor.

Perel Shmeltzstein, from the House of Zyman, dear wife of Shmuel, died in Brazil in 1967.

Baltshe Zyman, Miriam Lyman -- Both born in Demblin, died in Brazil.

In Sorrow: Andzje and Pinchas Tishman-Shmeltzstein / Tel Aviv

IN MEMORY OF OUR DEAR SON

Eliyahu, zal
Who was picked
at the dawn of his youth
On Elul 27, 5724 [1964]
At the age of only 15 springs

Deep sorrow descended upon us with the passing of our dear Eli. He was a wonderful boy, full of life and gifted with talent. Great is our grief and pain for his being uprooted from us at a young age and with such terrible cruelty.

Eli was gifted with a wonderful memory, quick perception, a well-developed aesthetic sense and talent for the arts. He was always optimistic, happy and fresh. Spending time in his innocent company always inspired us with joy and happiness. Since early in his childhood, he showed tendencies for dance, acting and painting. He dreamed of becoming a movie actor. As early as age six, he surprised people with parties, celebrations and solo dancing, which he created and improvised, and captured the heart of his audience with his graceful, agile movements and sense of mime. At age ten he enrolled at a course of "Bimatenu" [our stage], a children's theatre of Ohel [then a theatre], and participated in some of its shows.

He was active also in school, taking part in drama classes, parties and celebrations. At the end of his school years he coordinated and organized the painting and crafts shows, and his works adorned the walls of his school and the branch of his youth movement.

After graduating from elementary school, he continued studying painting and graphics and made good progress. Critics adored his paintings, especially the landscapes. Even at the hospital, when he was bed-ridden, he painted pictures for doctors and nurses, who treated him with much devotion and did all they could to cure him of the disease. To our great sorrow, however, medical science had still to learn how to cure Eli from his malignant disease [cancer].

He was well-loved and adored by his children friends, capturing their hearts and interest with games, stories and shows. He was developed for his age, well-versed with the news, and it was a great pleasure to converse with him. He was a good, smiling host, polite and kind, and knew how to respect both youngsters and adults.

He was devoted to his friends and was always ready to help others. In moments of suffering, he would ask why was he subject to such pain and misfortune. He believed that he would return home to concentrate on his studies and artistic work. But his life was cut short, and his pure soul left him after living only fifteen springs. In the midst of work for his future, he was felled, and his mind and heart stopped working! We, his parents and brothers, have no comfort.

Parents: Andje (Shmeltzstein) and Pinchas Tishman



WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU!



Shmuen and Kraindel Tishman, zal



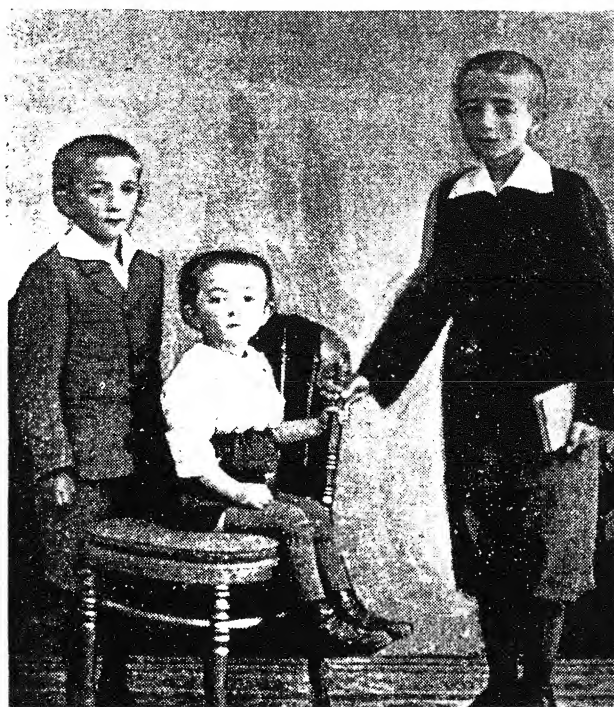
The Tishman-Wartzman Family, zal

In Sorrow: Velvel Tishman and wife / New York

OUR DEAR MARTYRS!



Shmuel Wartzman, zal



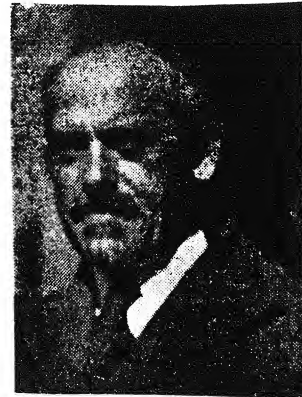
The grandchildren of Shmuel Tishman, zal

In Sorrow: Velvel Tishman and wife / New York



**TO THE HOLY MEMORY
OF OUR MURDERED**

**Mother,
Father, Sister,
Aunts And Uncles --
A Bitter Tear**



To the right: Our father, **Shmuel Arye Tenenboim**, born in 1888 in Demblin. Deported from Merinyak camp from Bordeaux in France to Auschwitz, at the end of August 1942

Above to the left: Our sister, **Sarenka Tenenboim**, born in 1918 in Demblin. Arrested the 16th of July, 1942 in Paris. Deported in August to Auschwitz.

Underneath: **Hodes Tenenboim**, born in 1902 in Demblin. Killed with her son **Lozer** in the Demblin ghetto.

Underneath on left: **Chava Tenenboim**, born 1901, killed in August 1942.



Forever Remembered By: **Wolf Tenenboim / Paris**
Benyamin Tena (Tenenboim) / Tel Aviv
Rivka Yachimovitch-Tenenboim / Warsaw

My dear mother

Nechama Rachel Shalit (Tenenboim)

Born 1890 in Laskerov;
Killed in the Brisk ghetto



Wolf Tenenboim

Our unforgettable uncle and aunt **David Lichts and Shoshe (Tenenboim)**
Killed in Warsaw on Moranov, during the uprising in the ghetto.

Our uncle **Mendel Apelgot**
Born in Demblin, shot in
Beshelery department Daradoyen

Our aunt **Hinde (Tenenboim)**
and their daughter **Liza --**
Deported in 1943 to Auschwitz



Forever Remembered By:
Wolf Tenenboim / Paris
Binyomin Tena (Tenenboim) / Tel Aviv
Rivke Yachimovitch-Tenenboim / Warsaw



TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF OUR DEAR
Chaim Traler

Forever remembered by:

*His wife **Perela Traler and family** / Paris
His brother **Avram Traler and family**/Israel
His sister **Bashe Traler and family** / Poland*

Chaim Traler, zal

With deep sorrow and agony we mourn
the untimely death of
our dear wife and mother

Rivah Tel-Traler, zal



Rivah Tel-Traler

In Mourning:

*Husband **Avram Tel-Traler***

*Sons **Yitzhak, Arye, Bella and the Shako family** in Israel*

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY
of my parents,
Saul and Devorale Yom-Tov,
my brother
Moshe-Chaim Yom-Tov



Pisel Halbesberg, Pesel Zaltzberg

My sisters **Sara-Tzirel** and **Pesel** with her husband **Ahron Halbesberg**
and son **Moshe-Chaim**

my cousin **Pesel Zaltzberg**

In Sorrow:

Yisrael and Henye (the granchildren) / Tel Aviv

Shalom-Matis Yom-Tov (the granchildren) / New York

Yitzhak-Ahron Yom-Tov (the granchildren) / Jerusalem



Yosef Ekheiser, zal
Died in the Holocaust



Nuach Ekheiser, zal
Died in Israel

Remembered By:

Penina Buskovsky, daughter of Yosef / New York

Yaacov Ekheiser / Tel Aviv

The brothers:

Hersh Ekheiser / Rechovot

Moshe Ekheiser / Petach-Tikva

The sisters:

Esther Kind / Poland

Gitel Birman

MEMORY OF JOSEPH EKHEISER

I met Joseph Ekheiser in a social setting in Ryki at the end of 1923. From that time on a friendship developed between us. In 1927 he helped me get a post in Demblin. After settling in town, we had close relations. I often looked him up in his community aid office. In that way I became acquainted with his clientele - little store owners and tradesmen. Someone who often went to see him was Moshe-Yosel Hochman, president of the small shopkeeper's association in Demblin.

Joseph Ekheiser was a trusted son of Jewish people. He interested himself in all of the events in Jewish life and in Demblin itself. He did a lot for the Jewish population, thanks to his good relationships with the officials in the Polish council [state government] and in the tax office.

Joseph Ekheiser was also a person who gave a lot of himself as a husband and as a father. He cared a great deal for his family, even in the most terrible moments of his life. He was able to save himself from having to go to Germany, but he believed that his wife and daughter had been sent there and needed him and he died on cursed German soil.

Dr. Kalman Paris / Petach Tikva



The Pilot **ALEXANDER KESTENBAUM (ARMON)**, zal

Born in Demblin on March 31, 1941
Fell in the skies of Sinai in the Six-Day War, 1967

He spent his first three years with his family in a German concentration camp. He immigrated to Israel in 1950. His last stop was Kibbutz Gan Shmuel.

In Mourning:
Frimah and Rafael Kestenboim / Israel

WITH GREAT SORROW AND SOMBER AGONY WE MOURN THE
MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY WHO DIED AND WERE MURDERED BY THE
NAZIS, YMS [Yimach Shmam, May Their Memory Be Erased]



Faiga Shtamler

Bluma

Yehusha



Avraham

Rachel

Raizel

Our father Reb **Yehusha** son of Reb **Benjamin Shtamler**
Our mother **Bluma Shtamler** from the house of Adelsberg
Our brother **Avraham Shtamler**, his wife **Faiga** from the
house of Roterman
and their daughters **Rachel, Sheva and Leah**
Our sisters **Rachel**, her husband **Pinchas Lichtbroit**
and their son **Benjamin**
Raizel Shtamler and our young brother **Laibela Shtamler**



Laibela

In Mourning:

Shmuel, Sara Shtamler and family / Israel

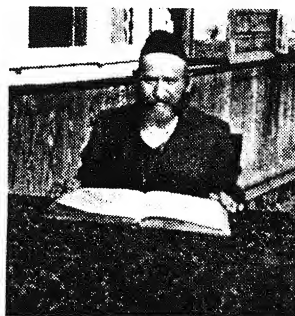
Benjamin, Roza Shtamler and family / Israel

Yitzhak, Bracha Shtamler and family / Israel

ON WHOM WE WEEP:



Rivka (Tzirnhas) Rozenberg
Died in 1934



David Rozenberg (Motel Shochets)
Killed by the Germans in 1942

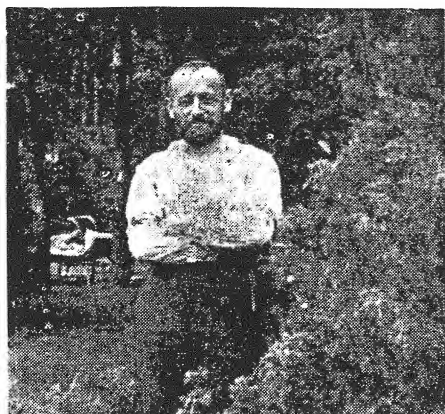


Sifrah Rozenberg, a partisan,
Murdered in the woods of Poland

In Eternal Memory:

Chaya Goldfarb-Rozenberg

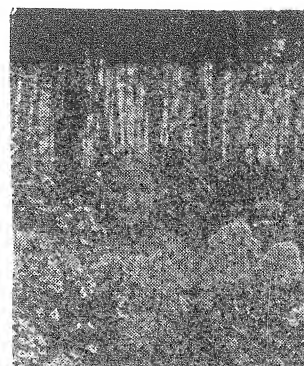
Yaacov Rozenberg / Tel Aviv



Hershel Goldfarb
Killed by the Germans in 1942



Mindel Goldfarb-Rozenberg
Died in 1930



Golde Goldfarb
Killed in 1944

Boez and Etil Rozenberg and children:
Golde, Tzirne, Sheva, Yitzhak, Nechma,
Motil and Avraham -- who were killed by
the Germans in 1942

In Eternal Memory:
Chaya Goldfarb-Rozenberg
Yaacov Rozenberg
Chana Ochobitzky-Goldfarb
Nechma Weisbrut-Goldfarb - Tel Aviv



Tzirna Goldfarb
Killed in 1944

WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER!

Chaim-Rueben Rozenberg, killed in 1940, at 50 years of age.

Itche Rozenberg, killed in 1944 at 17 years of age.

Shaindel Rozenberg, killed in 1940 at 47 years of age.

Itche Rozenberg, killed in 1940 at 17 years of age.

Aidel-Leah Rozenberg, killed in 1941 at 70 years of age.

Avraham-Lozer Rozenberg, killed in 1941 at 7 years of age.

Itchela Spektor, killed in 1941 at 16 years of age.

Pesach Blushtein, killed in 1940 at 39 years of age.

Chaya-Pesel Rozenberg, killed in 1940 at 18 years of age.



Chaim-Rueben Rozenberg and family



Pesel Rozenberg



Shalom Rozenberg



Pesach Blustein

Forever Remembered By:
Chaya-Bracha, Faiga, Chantshe

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF THE UNFORGETTABLE:



Yaacov-Mendel Rozenber
Killed in 1945



Rachel Rozenberg
Died in America



Itche Urbach
Born in 1908, killed in 1944



Freidale Spektor-Rozenberg
Killed by the A.K. [Polish Partisan Army]
in Demblin at the age of 23, in 1945,
after the liberation.



Ruzje-Mindel Friedman
Died in 1934 at the age of 34.

Those Who Remain, With Sorrow:

Moshe-Itche, Dorke and Motel Rozenberg in America and the family in Israel

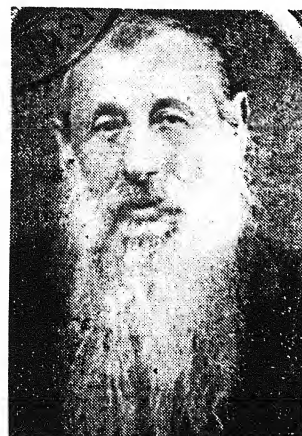
FOR THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF THE PUBLIC SERVANTS!



Perel London (Daitscher), zal



Yosef London, zal
Killed in the Holocaust



Moshe-Chaim Daitscher, zal
Died in 1942 in Israel



Kove London, zal



Hershk London, zal



Chelka London, zal

In Eternal Memory:
Chana and Mordechai Rozenwein / Tel Aviv

FOR THE MEMORY OF OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS:



My brother
Yitzhak-Isaac Rozenwein
and his daughters Gitel and Miriam

My father
Yechzakel zav Rozenwein, zal



My dear mother
Tovala Tzeshinsky
from the House of Wachenheizer



My sister **Leahela** with her husband **Benyamin Feldgaier**
Who were murdered by the boot-soldiers of Hitler, YMS

In Mourning:

Chana and Mordechai Rozenwein / Tel Aviv

FOR THE ETERNAL MEMORY

Of my parents, brothers and sisters who died, and those who were murdered and burned as innocent Jews with their families for their Jewishness by the German Nazis, the savages in the annihilation camps.

Land, do not cover their blood! Damned be the German Nazis!
May you remove their memory from Earth -- and we say amen.

My father Reb **Yitzchak Isaac Rozenwein**, AH [peace be upon him],
son of Leibke (Arye), AH, passed away in Demblin on Iyar 8, 1919.

My mother **Nechamah Leah Rozenwein**, AH, daughter of Chaim Meir,
AH, of the Holy Shalah Dynasty, passed away in Warsaw on Tamuz 8, 1923.

My sister **Bracha Chavah Rozenwein**, AH, daughter of
Yitzchak Isaac AH, passed away in Warsaw on Av 14, 1925.

My brother **Avraham Leib Rozenwein**, AH, son of Yitzchak Isaac, AH,
passed away in Demblin on Tevet 18, 1920.

My brother **Eliezer Rozenwein**, AH, son of Yitzchak Isaac, AH,
passed away in Warsaw in 1931.

My sister **Pesah Mindel Rotman**, born Rozenwein, HYD [Hashem Yikom Damo,
may God avenge her death] and her husband **MOSHE ROTMAN**, HYD,
Their six-year old daughter **Henia Rotman**, HYD, who perished for her
Jewishness in the Treblinka annihilation camp in 1943.

My sister **Hodel Faigenbloom**, born Rozenwein,
and her husband **Yehuda (Yodle) Faigenbloom**, HYD,
Their eight-year old son **Eliezer**, HYD, who died for his
Jewishness in the Treblinka annihilation camp in 1943.

On those my soul aches and I cannot forget, may their memory be blessed.

*-- The son and brother **Yisrael Rozenwein**, Ramat Gan*

A candle for the souls of the dear ones of my wife's family who passed away,
and those who died for their Jewishness by the damned Nazis.

My father Reb **Arye Seigel**, son of Eliezer, AH, passed away in Lubow in 1930.

My mother **Brainah Siegel**, daughter of Zvi, HYD.

My brother **Zvi Seigel**, son of Arye, and his family, HYD.

My sister **Etel Seigel**, daughter of Arye, and her family, HYD.

My sister **Clara Seigel**, daughter of Arye, HYD.

All of whom were murdered and burned in Treblinka in 1943 by the Nazi murderers.

My brother **Avraham** son of Arye Seigel, HYD, was murdered in Hungary.

I shall bear their agony in my heart to my last day. May their memory be blessed.

*-- Daughter and sister **Geiza Rozenwein**, born Seigel, Ramat Gan.*

IN MEMORY OF THIS WORLD

The family of Reb
Natan-David Torbiner
with his children
and grandchildren:
Molly, Bashe,
Yehudit, Eliezer, Ber.

His wife and child -
tortured with all the
Demblin martyrs by the
German murderers.



The **Axelrod family**, lived in Demblin before the First World War, after that in Warsaw at 62 Pavye. They were tortured in camps and in the Warsaw ghetto.

May their souls be included with the living.

My father **Yosef Axelrod**, son of Yisrael - died in the Warsaw ghetto in 1940.
My mother **Shaindel Axelrod**, daughter of Tzvi Hershel-died in the Warsaw ghetto
in 1941.

My brother **Laibel Axelrod**, son of Yosef, his wife **Rachel**, daughter **Esther** and
Menucha.

My brothers **Hershel** and **Yisrael**.

Sister **Tzevya-Leah**, her husband **Yaacov Nelkin**, their son **David-Yichiel**,
daughter **Libe**.

Sister **Sara**, her husband **Yisrael-David Levkovitch**, their daughters **Menucha** and
Chaya and 2 1/2 year old grandchild **Chaimel**.

All murdered by the Nazis in Treblinka, Sobibor, Maidanek, Auschwitz.

In deep sorrow will I always carry in my heart your memory and may this memorial
established by this book forever immortalize you.

Land, do not cover their blood -- and may their memory be blessed!

Forever Remembered By:

Rivka Yitzhak from the House of **Axelrod** / Toronto, Canada

(daughter, sister and mother of the murdered little boy **Chaimel** son of **Shloma Lerman**)

WE WILL NEVER FORGET YOU
OUR DEAR FATHER AND HUSBAND



Samson Rozenman, zal

We will never forget you, our dear father and husband, who died right at
the time he was liberated from the death camp

In Deep Sorrow:

<i>Wife</i>	<i>Chana Rozenman / Paris</i>
<i>Son</i>	<i>Yitzhak Rozenman / Paris</i>
<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Ida Bubis / Paris</i>
<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Hadassa Weintraub / Paris</i>
<i>Brother-in-law</i>	<i>Chaim-Meir Goldberg / Israel</i>
<i>Sister</i>	<i>Sara Gropak / Israel</i>
<i>Brother-in-law</i>	<i>Avraham Goldberg / Paris</i>

AN ETERNAL FLAME FOR MY FAMILY, MURDERED BY THE NAZIS, YMS

Their holy memory will stay in my heart forever
with love and agony I shall remember

My father, **Mordechai-Shmuel Goldman**; my mother **Rachel** (from the house of Rotering),
my brother **Pinchas**, his wife and children; my brother **Laibish**, his wife and children;
my brother **Hershel**.

My sister: **Leah**, her husband and children, **Miriam-Devorah**, **Chaya-Esther**,
T. N. Tz .B. H.



The Goldman Family

In Mourning: Nachman Goldman, Asseret, Israel

A Light Always

My father **David Shildkroit**
My mother **Esther Shildkroit**
My sisters **Chana, Golde (Zehava)**
My brothers **Avraham and Yosef Shildkroit**



Forever Remembered By: Yisrael Shildkroit / Australia

Yosef Shildkroit



The paratrooper **Shamai Shayevitch**, zal

Born on April 18, 1948.

Fell in a military operation in the Beit She'an Valley on September 19, 1968.

Fought in the Six-Day War with a combat unit, participated in the
Karameh military operation.

Excelled in his devotion and responsibility.

In Eternal Memory:

Parents: Michael and Sara-Leah / Israel

Sister: Dinala Shayevitch / Israel

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF THE SHAPIRO FAMILY



Son **Menasha Shapiro**

Daughter-in-law **Chaya Shapiro**

Son **Yaacov Shapiro**

Menasha's son-in-law (Yehudit's husband),
Shloma Brandshpigel

Chana Shapiro

Daughter-in-law **Golde Shapiro**

Daughter **Yehudit Shapiro**

Son **Yaacov Shapiro**

In Eternal Sorrow:

Esther Shapiro-Tenenboim / Paris

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY!



My sister
Liba Goldshtein



My mother
Pesel Shteinbuch



Little Malka, Rachel Shteinbuch, Shaindel Shteinbuch

Forever Remembered By:
Mendel Shteinbuch / In America



My Uncle,
Yankel Borenshtein

TO THE
ETERNAL
MEMORY



My mother,
Dinala Faigenboim

Forever Remembered By: Ita Abramovitch (Faigenboim)

To the eternal memory
of my dear wife and a beloved mother
Gitela Abenshtein
who died in New York



We Remember in Sorrow:

*Her husband, **Avraham Abenshtein** / New York*

The daughters:

***Manya Abenshtein-Melchy and family** / Israel*

***Lodja Rozenberg and family** / New York*

***Tzeshe Tzimbrovitch and family** / New York*

***Regina Borkovitch and family** / New York*

TO THE ETERNAL
MEMORY OF MY
unforgettable husband,
Yehudit-Tzvi (Yidel)
Abenshtein,
born in 1906
and killed in 1945
by the German
murderers.



INSTEAD OF A GRAVESTONE!

*In Sorrow: **Chaya Abenshtein** / Petach-Tikva*

TO THE MEMORY OF MY MURDERED FAMILY

My brother **Avraham Danovitch**

Leah-Shaindel Nisenblatt

My sister **Sara Danovitch**

Chantshe Nisenblatt

The family **Nisenblatt**

Gutshe Nisenblatt

David Nisenblatt

Nechtshe Nisenblatt

Baila Nisenblatt

*Forever Remembered By: **The Danovitch family** in Israel*

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF THE DEAR

Yisrael-Laib Ainshindler

Bluma Ainshindler and children

Sara-Leah Ainshindler

Esther Ainshindler, her husband and children

Avram Ainshindler

Mashe Ainshindler and children

In Sorrow:

Ahron-Zalman Ainshindler

Barne Ainshindler and wife

Ruzjke Zaltzberg-Ainshindler

Toshe Ainshindler (Fevitch) and husband in Chicago

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF MY DEAR
Moshe, Liba, Leah, Sime, Tzirel, Malka and Alter Reznikovitch



Neché Borkovitch (Dejentshol)

And the family:
Avigdor, Neche,
Rivka and
Genendel Borkovitch



Avigdor Borkovitch

In Sorrow: Aidel and Devorah Reznikovitch / New York

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER!



My father
Yitzhak Shilling



My sister
Miriam Shilling-Tzimbrovitch



My sister
Nemia Shilling-Puterman

In Sorrow:

Tzeshe Shilling-Mandelboim and family / Israel

Rivka Shilling-Luxenburg and family / New York

Shmuel Shilling and family / New York



In memory of my parents, my sisters, my grandmother and grandfather,
my aunts and uncles who were killed in the Holocaust
by the damned Nazis and their followers

Father **Chaim-Shmuel Garbovnik**, mother **Matil**

Sisters: **Shaindel, Serka, Rivka, Chaya;**

Grandfather **Yoel Feldman**, Grandmother **Simah**

Uncle **Laibel Feldman**, Aunts: **Leah, Esther-Raizel, Chana** and **Sarah**

In Bitter Mourning:

Ahron Garbovnik and his family / Natanya

To the memory of the warm hearted,
good human being, our dear devoted
Aunt, Esther Zaborovsky-Faigenboim

Esther Zavorovsky-Faigenboim

Cursed should forever be the murderous
German people, who cut off your life in
the years when your life was flowering.

Great and unforgettable is our sorrow.
We will always have you before our eyes.



Esther Zavorovsky-Faigenboim

Mordechai and Sara-Yechudit Davidovit-Teichman

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF MY DEAR CHILDREN
WHO WERE KILLED BY HITLER'S BRUTAL AGENTS



Yisrael-Tovya and Henech Tener

In Sorrow:
Sarale Tener / Tel Aviv

TO THE MEMORY OF MY UNFORGETTABLE PARENTS AND BROTHER



Ita-Rachel Teichman



Hersh Teichman



Eliezer Teichman

Grandfather Reb **Chaim-Shmuen Weinwortzel, zal;**
Grandmother **Shaindel Weinwortzel, AH, Leahela Teichman, AH**

In Eternal Sorrow:
Anka Yoskovitch-Teichman and family / Holon

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY
OF MY DEAR BROTHER
Tzaduk Yom-Tov, zal



Forever Remembered by: Laibel and Rachale Yom-Tov / Sheda Nachum

INSTEAD OF A MONUMENT ON THE UNKNOWN GRAVES OF THE FAMILY:



Yichiel Luxenburg

Genya Luxenburg

Shaindel Luxenburg

Akiba Langleben, Sara-Gitel, Shmuel, Faiga, Yaacov, Tzirel and Roza, Shtainfeld Yisrael, Miriam-Dina Laibish, Yehudit, Perele Monish, Latshe and Shmuel-Nachum Luxenburg, Velvel and Berel Luxenburg, Chaya, Laibel, Ali, Yedidi, Yichiel and family, Genya, Shaindel, Peretz, David, Tzeppora and three children, Fraida, Monish and Latshe.

Sorrowfully:

Sara Langleben / Montreal, Canada

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY
OF THE PUDLE FAMILY

My husband **Shalom Pudle**

His father **Hersh Pudle**

His mother **Dina Pudle**



In Sorrow:
Braindel Pudle / Hadara

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU

My father, **Yidel Samet**

My mother, **Faige-Leah Samet**

and **Mendel Tzukerman**



In Eternal Sorrow:
Benyamin Samet / In America



TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF OUR PARENTS
Yosef and Miriam (Handelsman), Rueben; brother **Aba Rueben (Zjelichovsky)**,
 the sisters **Mineh Rueben** and daughter **Lily**,
Poleh Rueben Ekheizer with her daughter **Haline**,
 brother-in-law **Efraim Pshednovek** and son **Izio**

In Sorrow:

Saul Rueben, Dora Pshednovek (Rueben) / Paris

Moshe Rueben / Natanya

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER
 my dear sister
Poleh Ekheizer (Rueben)
 tragically killed with
 her daughter
Haline



Forever Remember By:

Moshe Rueben / Natanya

INSTEAD OF A GRAVESTONE, THE LUXENBURG FAMILY



Franye Luxenburg



Shaindel Shtamler-Luxenburg

Shmuel Nachum Luxenburg
Lahtshe Luxenburg
Yichiel Luxenburg
Franye Luxenburg
Viyeshke Luxenburg
Genye Luxenburg
Shaindel Luxenburg
Peretz Luxenburg



**Yichiel Luxenburg, his wife Franye,
their child Viyeshke, Genye Luxenburg.**

In Sorrow:

Binyamin Shtamler / Israel

Avram Luxenburg / Sweden

ETERNAL MEMORY FOR THE PUBLIC SERVANTS!



To the Katz'ka family
who were killed in the Holocaust

In Eternal Memory:

Eliezer Katz'ka / Tel Aviv

Ahron Katz'ka / Kibbutz Netzar-Sirny

AN ETERNAL FLAME ALWAYS IN OUR MEMORY

	Yichiel and Chana Roterman
Their daughters:	Faiga and Manye
Their sons:	Yichzekel and Ahron, Eliezer and Lehtzya Roterman
and their children:	Ita, Shaveh and Raizel
Teacher:	Mendel Lichtenshtein and his beloved wife Esther
and their children:	Yisrael, Moshe, Berel, Chaim and Chaya

In Memory:

Rueben Roterman / Haifa

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF

My father **Yitzhak Bergman**

My brother **Yisrael-Ahron Bergman**

In Sorrow:

Yichiel Bergman / Chicago

WE WILL NEVER FORGET YOU

Henyek Zaltzman

Ben-Tzion Honigsboim

Raizele Honigsboim

Chavele Honigsboim

Blimele Honigsboim

Forever Remembered By:

Ita Karmirol (Samet) / Chicago, United States

To the memory of my cousin who was rescued in the Warsaw ghetto
by Moshe Rubenstein in 1941 and a year later was killed in Sobibor.



Perel Mandelboim



Bashe and Gitel Mandelboim

In Sorrow:

Moshe Rubenstein and family / Canada

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY
of my unforgettable wife
Chavala Rubenstein (Hochman)
and child



Forever Remembered By:
Natan Rubenstein / Haifa

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF

My father	Yosel Eichenboim, zal
My mother	Malka Eichenboim (Ainshindler), AH
My sister	Sarah Yudenshneider (Ainshindler), AH
Her husband	Meir Yudenschneider and children, zal
Her sister	Teme Eichenboim, AH
Her sister	Hentsha Eichenboim, AH

Killed by the Nazis

In Sorrow:

Yitzhak Eichenboim and family / United States

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF

My father	Moshe Milgroim, zal
My mother	Zlate Milgroim, AH
My sister	Shaindel Milgroim, AH

Killed by the Nazis

In Sorrow:

Faiga Gembitzky (Milgroim) and family / United States

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF OUR FAMILY

Father	David Shloma Fuks
Mother	Chaya Aidel Fuks (Ainshindler)
Brother	Yitzhak Fuks
His wife	Braindel Fuks (Adenshtein)
Brother	Moshe Fuks
Grandfather	Faivel Ainshindler
Grandmother	Hodes Ainshindler (Milgroim)
Uncle	Henich Gedankenstein
Aunt	Leah Granek (Ainshindler)
Her daughter	Velvel Ainshindler
Uncle	Sara Granekstein
Aunt	Henye Ainshindler
Her children	Chaim, Shmai, Laibel, Moshe, Yitzhak
Our sister	Teme Tishler (Fuks) Lived through the camps in Demblin until the liberation, died in Costa Rica on July 1, 1969



Teme Tishler (Fuks)

Remembered Forever By:
Sara Faifer (Fuks) / New York
Shmai Fuks / Tel Aviv

A MEMORY FOR THE FAMILIES THAT PERISHED LEAVING NO ONE
TO MAKE THEIR MEMORY LINGER FOR EVER AND EVER.

*A Yartzeit candle for the murdered families of whom nobody remained to
perpetuate their memory.*

Committee of those who left Demblin-Modzjitz



Moshe Rotschild, zal



Tzevyta Opes, zal



Yosef Aidelman, zal



Avraham Shillinger, zal



Blustein, zal

**A MEMORY FOR THE FAMILIES THAT PERISHED LEAVING NO ONE
TO MAKE THEIR MEMORY LINGER FOR EVER AND EVER.**

*A Yartzeit candle for the murdered families of whom nobody remained to
perpetuate their memory.*

Committee of those who left Demblin-Modzjitz



Esther Puterflam, zal



Yone Borshtein, zal



Shmuel Rechtman, zal



Lipa Shtamler, zal



Meir Shtamler, zal



David Goldfinger, zal

A MEMORY FOR THE FAMILIES THAT PERISHED LEAVING NO ONE
TO MAKE THEIR MEMORY LINGER FOR EVER AND EVER.

*A Yartzeit candle for the murdered families of whom nobody remained to
perpetuate their memory.*

Committee of those who left Demblin-Modzjitz



Chaim Zilberman, zal
son of Yoske



Yaacov Perelstein, zal



Shloma Shtern, zal



Moshe Iglitsky, zal



Eliezer Faigenboim, zal

**A MEMORY FOR THE FAMILIES THAT PERISHED LEAVING NO ONE
TO MAKE THEIR MEMORY LINGER FOR EVER AND EVER.**

*A Yartzeit candle for the murdered families of whom nobody remained to
perpetuate their memory.*

Committee of those who left Demblin-Modzjitz



Alter Rubenstein, zal



Wolf Flamenboim, zal



Avraham Shulman, zal

It is difficult to accept the tragic message from Brussels (Belgium) on the sudden death of our dear friend Avraham Shulman, zal, who passed away on December 25, 1969.

Fate had it that his memory would be registered in the memorial book for the martyrs of our city and the book that he, with others, initiated and worked for. He was endlessly devoted and looked forward to coming to Israel for the evening marking the book's completion.

He was an honorable man and a friend. He loved his family and was completely devoted to it. He was elated to meet his townspeople, and regarded them all as members of his family.

His health was not good, but he persistently fought his illness. Although secular, he was deeply moved when he came to the Western Wall. When visiting the Holocaust Memorial, he wept like a little child. He saw in the urns that contained the ashes the remnants of the members of his family who had perished.

He sent his two sons to Israel at the break of the Six Day War. He also came with his wife to be in Israel during the hard times.

He loved Israel very much. His dream was to make aliyah. In a letter that was received before his death he asked them to find him a home. His death prevented him from making his dream true.

All our townspeople mourn his death and share his family's grief.

Y. Rozenberg, Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv, December 30, 1969

